

# *The Other Side*

OF

## *The "Story,"*

BEING SOME REVIEWS CRITICIZING "THE STORY OF THE  
UPPER CANADIAN REBELLION ;"

ALSO,

## THE LETTERS

IN THE

## MACKENZIE-ROLPH CONTROVERSY

AND

A CRITIQUE ON "THE NEW STORY."

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*By JOHN KING, Barrister.*

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TORONTO :

JAMES MURRAY & Co., 26 AND 28 FRONT STREET WEST.



THE  
OTHER SIDE OF THE "STORY,"

BEING SOME REVIEWS OF MR. J. C. DENT'S FIRST VOLUME

OF

"The Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion,"

AND

THE LETTERS

IN THE

MACKENZIE-ROLPH CONTROVERSY.

ALSO,

A CRITIQUE, HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED, ON

"THE NEW STORY."

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"I have read somewhere or other, in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, I think, that history is philosophy teaching by examples."—*Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke.*

"William Lyon Mackenzie was the leader of the real struggle for Responsible Government in Canada. He conducted the political siege, and headed the storming party that effected the breach. Mackenzie personified the *vim* and virtues, personal and political, that fought the fight and won it."—*New York Tribune.*

"That Mr. Dent is bent on exalting Dr. Rolph at the expense of other characters, and notably at the expense of Lyon Mackenzie, . . . nobody can fail to remark. He has a right to the indulgence of his fancy: these are the days of hero worship, rehabilitations and historical paradox; but he cannot expect us all at once to bow down to the image which he has set up, and to trample on the image which he has cast down."—*The Week.*

"Truly, no man is ever so effectually written down as when he himself holds the pen."  
—*J. C. Dent.*

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TORONTO:

JAMES MURRAY & CO., PRINTERS, 26 AND 28 FRONT STREET WEST.

1886.





## INTRODUCTORY.

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FEW words of introduction are needed for this *brochure*, and none to justify its appearance at the present time. The prospectus of the "Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion" promised the public that it would be written "from a Liberal but non-partisan point of view." Had this promise been kept, these pages would never have seen the light. But the faith plighted in the word has been broken in the deed. It has been broken repeatedly—may we not say deliberately?—throughout the volume.

Mr. Dent's Story is *not* Liberal in any proper sense of the term. A Liberal in political or historical authorship is not only a friend to liberty, but to liberty's friends, whether living or dead. To all alike he is, or at least ought to be, fair and considerate, just and generous. To those who have battled and suffered for popular rights in freedom's cause, he should never be anything else.

Nor is the Story non-partisan. It is a fierce, and in many respects, vindictive arraignment of the Oligarchy of ante-Rebellion times. Not a few may say that this is right. Others—and we think many of the most intelligent adherents of the Liberal party in Canada—while admitting considerable justification, will not go the lengths that Mr. Dent has gone, and will have little sympathy with his injudicious and intemperate methods. Only the strongest provocation can justify venomous detraction of the dead. The writer of the narrative has received none such in the case of Chief Justice Robinson, Bishop Strachan, William Lyon Mackenzie, and others whom he has relentlessly pursued beyond the grave. Authorship of that stamp is not Liberal; it is no honour to the name; it is the narrowest kind of intolerance and bigotry.

In regard to William Lyon Mackenzie and John Rolph, the partisanship of the Story is beyond all question. A single paragraph in the chapter on the "Fathers of Reform" proves this conclusively, while the whole volume is a standing witness against its pretended impartiality. In so far as both these historical personages are concerned, this bulky book is partisan from the circumference to the core.

The appearance of so extraordinary a Story at once challenged criticism from the press. In this the leading organs of the rival parties took opposite sides. But considering the manifest disfavour with which life-long and pronounced Reformers received this new conception of Rebellion history, the *Mail's* editorial review was mildness itself. Other Conservative newspapers have been more distinctly hostile. The *Globe* committed itself strongly at the outset to the general scope of the narrative, especially those portions of it denunciatory of Family Compact rule. It praised the book, and defended it against the *Mail's* review. But, if there be any truth in a startling rumor afloat as to the paternity of its own reviews, their laudatory tone can occasion no surprise. With respect to the Mackenzie-Rolph analyses, criticisms and contrasts, it was for a long time silent. But when the storm of controversy fairly broke, it had honestly to admit that such a controversy was "inevitable." Mr. Dent's indiscretions had too plainly precipitated the issue to make any other statement possible.

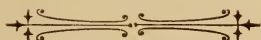
The outside organs of Reformers have concurred with their leading journal on this point, but not in its estimate of the book as a whole. As to this there have been differences of opinion, with, in a number of cases, strong disapproval of Mr. Dent's historical treatment of his two most prominent "personalities." Up to the present time not a single newspaper, expressing the views of the Reform party, has endorsed the author's judgments on either Mackenzie or Rolph. The voice of what is known as the independent and non-party press must always command attention in such a discussion. It spoke in temperate tones, but unmistakably condemned the book. The attempt to manufacture political capital out of this "old, old story" will scarcely succeed. The great rival parties of Canada will be more likely to stand or fall on their present relative merits, than on the sins or follies of either of them fifty years ago.

What more need be said? The attitude deliberately taken up by the author with respect to William Lyon Mackenzie, made it the imperative duty of that worthy's friends and admirers to interpose, at the earliest possible moment, between him and his defamer, and, if necessary, to vindicate his name and memory. They would have been false to their political faith and antecedents, and to all the honoured traditions of Reform, had they failed to do so. In the publication of this pamphlet, which will express to a certain extent the feelings and sentiments of Reformers everywhere, that duty has been partially discharged. It can scarcely fail to be supplemented hereafter, and in due time, it is expected, will be fully completed in an enlarged and improved edition

of the life and times of the old Liberal leader. Meanwhile, the accompanying letters and newspaper reviews will be found exceedingly readable, interesting and instructive. They contain important facts which have never before appeared in print, and are, as a whole, pointedly and pungently written. The last critique is now published for the first time. "The Other Side of the Story" reflects, I believe, the views of men of all shades of political opinion, and should be acceptable to all alike. All that is asked for it is a fair and thoughtful perusal.

JOHN KING.

BERLIN, *March 15th, 1886.*





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# MR. DENT'S STORY

## OF THE

# UPPER CANADIAN REBELLION.

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A STORYTELLER IN HISTORIC GARB.

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THE following ably written, calm and dispassionate review of Mr. Dent's book appeared in the *Toronto Daily Mail* of November 19th, 1885 :

An impression has got abroad that Mr. Dent's "Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion" is to be a whitewashing book. The conclusion has been hastily formed, and so far as we can see at present, without sufficient foundation. The fantastic idea of elevating Dr. Rolph on a pedestal of glory is, it must be confessed, a sinister omen. Mr. Dent has undertaken the herculean task of making a hero out of the most unpromising material, the most unheroic of men ; but that he intends to go to the extent of washing the blackamore white is an assumption unwarranted by anything that appears in the first volume. The proper place for the chief director of an insurrection is at the head of his forces, and there Dr. Rolph ought to have been at the rising of Yonge Street in December, 1837. Instead of being in the van of the movement of which he was a principal director, he suddenly appeared clothed in the livery of the Government which the insurrection was intended to overthrow, accompanied by as loyal a man as ever drew breath, Robert Baldwin, and flying a flag of truce. The strange spectacle of this inexplicable transformation struck his bewildered followers with horror and dismay. They concluded that they were betrayed, and many still hold that the act was one of treachery. Assuredly it was unheroic.

The development of the central idea of the book—that Dr. Rolph was a hero whom the world has hitherto ungratefully neglected—is set about without circumlocution, and in a way which shows that the author intends to do his best in the performance of his task. Under Mr. Dent's manipulation Dr. Rolph, who read his *Braithwaite* and compounded his pills like any ordinary physician, becomes “unquestionably one of the most extraordinary persons who ever figured in the annals of Upper Canada.” To this extent critical readers, with a living knowledge of the facts, would probably be willing to go. But the directions in which an individual may differ from the ordinary run of mortals are various, not necessarily admirable. “Like Bacon,” Mr. Dent says of his hero, “he seems to have taken all knowledge to be his province.” The reader is asked to accept this preposterous eulogy on the strength of a couple of speeches, which have a strong odour of the midnight oil about them, and which were probably indebted to many touches made after the speeches had been delivered, and which gave them their final form.

In elevating his hero Mr. Dent has thought it necessary to depress contemporaries and colleagues not less than Family Compact Tories. Chief Justice Robinson, Henry John Boulton, Christopher Hagerman, Chief Justice Powell, and even William Lyon Mackenzie, are all minimized for the greater glory of one man. The following specimen of the style of contrast in which Mr. Dent indulges may be regarded as the keynote of the book:—

“No two human beings could well be more unlike than William Lyon Mackenzie and John Rolph. They were compelled to work together in a common cause for many years, but the two entities were thoroughly antagonistic, and there was never much personal liking between them. The structure of their bodies was not more dissimilar than was that of their minds. The one, slight, wiry, and always in motion, seemed as though it might be blown hither and thither by any strong current. The other, solid almost to portliness, was suggestive of fixity, of self-dependence, and unsusceptibility to outside influences. The one was suggestive of being in a great measure the creature of circumstances; the other of being a law unto himself—one who would



be more likely to influence circumstances than to be influenced by them."

This contrast is kept up throughout the volume. It is, no doubt, a high crime and misdemeanour for one man to be inferior in stature and portliness to another, and a very transcendent merit in him who outweighs any other man with whom he may be favourably contrasted.

A somewhat minute examination of the manner in which Mr. Dent does his work may not, perhaps, be amiss. Let us "taste" the book at the first chapter. The theme is the "Banished Briton," and it professes to be an account of the persecution which Robert Gourlay suffered at the hands of the Family Compact. Let us premise that, for the treatment of Mr. Gourlay, we have not one word to offer by way of palliation. He was arbitrarily ordered to leave the province, under cover of the Alien Act, the charge being that he had endeavoured to alienate the minds of the King's subjects from their attachment to his person and Government, and to raise a rebellion. On one point the evidence against him, if technically true, was substantially false. No one, who had been in the province more than six months, could be legally tried under the Alien Act. One of the witnesses swore that Gourlay had not been in the province long enough to exempt him from trial under this Act. One of the magistrates before whom Gourlay was tried, Dickson, Mr. Dent says, "had been in constant and familiar intercourse with him for sixteen months." The inference intended to be drawn is that Gourlay, at the time of the trial, December 21, 1818, had been continuously in the country for a period of sixteen months. It is certain that, on the 17th September, 1818, three months and four days before the trial, Gourlay was in New York, where he had arrived on the 13th. But the fact, if it enabled the witness to quiet his conscience, would not affect the question of domicile in ordinary cases. Still, it is at least possible that, in this state of the facts, Isaac Swayze did not feel the guilt of perjury on his soul; a man under the influence of party passion may well have believed that the prisoner, who had been in New York three months before, had not, within the meaning of the statute, been a resident of the

province for the last six months preceding the date of the information.

Of the Alien Act Mr. Dent says, "This statute, be it observed, was not passed at Westminster during the supremacy of the Plantagenets or the Tudors, but at York, Upper Canada, during the 44th year of Geo. III." Was this statute, as Mr. Dent would have us believe, so anti-British in spirit as to have been unheard of even in the times of the Plantagenets and the Tudors? We need not go back to these remote times for examples. So late as 1816, the Solicitor-General of England stated in the House of Commons, that the Crown possessed the power of sending aliens out of the country by an act of prerogative, without the sanction of the statute law. And the Alien Act, passed during the administration of Pitt, threw the burden of proof on the accused—a departure from a general rule of law which, as one of Mr. Gourlay's counsel, Mr. McAdam, told him afterwards, had become not uncommon. At the time of Gourlay's trial it was a standing order of the House of Lords that no naturalization bill should be read a second time, unless a certificate of the person to be naturalized was signed by the Secretary of State. The Alien Acts of Upper and Lower Canada, concerning as they did matters of Imperial interest and Imperial policy, were no doubt passed in pursuance of orders sent out from Downing-street. Both were directed against offending British subjects as well as aliens. All British subjects who had resided in France for the space of six months subsequent to the 10th June, 1789, were brought under purview of the Lower Canada Act. The Alien Act of the United States conferred on the President authority to deport by his mere fiat, and without any form of trial, aliens suspected of designs against the Republic; and, at one time, there were no less than seventy thousand persons who were liable to be sent out of the country in this arbitrary way. Compared with the powers vested in the President of the United States, the Alien Act of Upper Canada under which Gourlay was tried, was, in the procedure which it sanctioned, mild and merciful. But it suits the purpose of Mr. Dent to describe the Alien Act of Upper Canada as a measure of



unknown severity, as one which would not have been passed at Westminster during the supremacy of the Plantagenets or the Tudors.

Nor is Mr. Dent's account of the causes and consequences of Gourlay's trial a whit nearer the mark. He says: "To what, then, was his long and bitter persecution to be attributed? Why had he been deprived of his liberty; thrust into a dark and unwholesome dungeon; refused the benefit of the *Habeas Corpus* Act [he was in fact brought up under a writ of *Habeas Corpus*]; denied his enlargement upon bail or mainprize; branded as a malefactor of the most dangerous kind; badgered and tortured to the ruin of his health and his reason? Merely this: he had imbibed, in advance, the spirit of Mr. Arthur Clemenman, and had 'wanted to know.' He had displayed a persistent determination to let in the light of day upon the iniquities and rascalities of public officials. He had denounced the system of patronage and favoritism in the disposal of the Crown lands. He had inveighed against some of the human bloodsuckers of that day, in language which certainly was not gracious or parliamentary, but which as certainly was most forcible and true. He had ventured to speak in contumelious terms of the reverend rector of York himself, whom he had stigmatized as 'a lying little fool of a renegade Presbyterian.' Nay, he had advised the sending of commissioners to England to entreat Imperial attention to colonial grievances. He had been the one man in Upper Canada possessed of sufficient courage to do and to dare; to lift the thin and flimsy veil which only half concealed the corruption whereby a score of greedy vampires were rapidly enriching themselves at the public cost. He had dared to hold up to general inspection the baneful effects of an irresponsible Executive, and of a dominating clique whose one hope lay in preserving the existing order of things undisturbed. It was for this that the inquisition had wreaked its vengeance upon him; for this that the vials of Executive wrath had been poured upon his head; for this that his body had been subjugated and his nerves lacerated by more than seven months' close imprisonment; for this that he had been "ruined in fortune and overwhelmed in mind."

Mr. Dent had the means of knowing, and we fear it must be said

that he could not help knowing, the untruthfulness of the statement which he endorses, that Gourlay, through his imprisonment, "had been ruined in fortune and overwhelmed in mind." Gourlay was bankrupt when he left England. No less than \$20,000 would have been necessary to put his affairs on a secure foundation. He tried to borrow in various directions without success, and came to Canada mainly with that object. If his affairs were wound up, he admitted, before he reached Canada at all, that none of his creditors would get much (letter to Mrs. Gourlay, April 17, 1817). The charge that he was overwhelmed in his mind by political persecution will not stand the test of investigation. The nervous weakness which overcame him on his trial before Judge Powell in August, 1819, which took place in consequence of his not having obeyed the order of the magistrates to leave the country, did not then show itself for the first time. In a letter to the Hon. Thomas Clark, dated Niagara Falls, September 1, 1817, he says:—"A nervous weakness, which got hold of me at Liverpool [in the previous April], but which my voyage and travels so far dissipated, has increased with my confinement till I find myself totally unable to speak with you on the state of my affairs—the prime object of my crossing the Atlantic." The "confinement" here mentioned probably had reference to a change in his mode of life which deprived him of his accustomed exercise. Seven months' imprisonment, which he afterwards underwent, would not be likely to make a mental wreck of a person who was previously in a sound mental condition. About half that time Gourlay was kept in close confinement. "While yet I had free range of the prison," he says (*Statistical Account*, vol. II., page 401), "it was my custom to sit from seven till ten at night in the doorway, noting the course of nature and inhaling the very air of heaven, balmy and sweet, and invigorating." In January, 1819, he reported himself as being "in comfortable winter quarters," and on the 27th April he wrote:—"My confinement is not severe upon me, now that I have the whole range of a large house." But still, even then, a giddiness in the head marked the continuance of the nervous symptoms which first showed themselves at Liverpool, and which were his early companions in Canada. On the 26th July he complains of close confinement and unreasonable surveillance.

Mr. Gourlay "wanted to know, you know," and, when he found out, he intended to let the public know by publishing "a statistical account of Upper Canada." And he, at one time, cherished the fond hope that the "lying little fool of a renegade Presbyterian," as he politely styled Dr. Strachan, and the hated Family Compact, would hand over a heap of shekels to aid him in the enterprise. But Governor Gore's Administration turned a deaf ear to his loving appeals. Nothing daunted by the rebuff, Gourlay made up his mind to return to the charge when a new governor had come to Upper Canada. Writing to Mrs. Gourlay from New York, September 17th, 1818, he said, "My plan is to return to Canada and solicit his (Sir Perigrine Maitland's) patronage to my statistical enquiries, which the old (Gore's) administration would not countenance." To Mr. John Rankin this statement was repeated in another letter of the same date. A writer who asks a grant of public money, to enable him to publish a statistical work, must be presumed to imply that, in such work, he will at least abstain from gross abuse of his patrons. But Maitland's Administration proved as obdurate as that of Gore had been; and when Mr. Gourlay failed to get the grant for which he had twice sent up a beseeching cry to the Council Chamber, he must have felt the refusal as conferring on him a grateful license of freedom, not quite equal perhaps to the hard cash, but still a species of compensation which, if not complete, might be enjoyed to the full. The result was that statistics occupied but a small part of the three volumes, and abuse of the Family Compact a very large part. From this pure source Mr. Dent has drawn great store of seraphic inspiration.

Another conspicuous merit of Mr. Gourlay was that "he had denounced the system of patronage and favouritism in the disposal of Crown lands." This he did with great good will; but he did something more. After he was utterly ruined and was in desperate circumstances, he magnanimously offered to begin to take over to himself Crown lands by the round million of acres at a time. Of course, his object must have been to save the lands from the clutches of "the bloodsuckers of the day." He wished to follow the example of Col. Talbot, to whom an immense grant of lands had

been made. He was willing to be another Penn, to trade in philanthropy and work his worthy way to wealth. The *naivete* of his letters to Lord Bathurst is quite refreshing. "I could afford to pay the Government," he blandly suggested, "one dollar per acre, say for one million acres to begin with, by three instalments, at the end of five, six, and seven years, and so on for an indefinite term, receiving more and more land from the Government, to settle as the process went on and payments were made good." He wrote to Lady Torrance, trying to get her aid in forwarding his scheme. In these letters he represented that the public lands, managed after his fashion, would yield enough to support two regiments; though, several years after, over half a million of acres, brought to sale for taxes, fetched only thirteen cents an acre. If Gourlay had got his way he would have reformed the land-granting system with a vengeance. He inveighed against the "bloodsuckers," but he showed that he had the capacity to suck more blood than all the Family Compact taken together, if he had got the opportunity. Mr. Dent has failed to point out to public reprobation the "score of greedy vampires who enriched themselves at the public cost," and, if called upon to make good the sweeping charge, he would be obliged to confess a failure.

It is not necessary to stop to apportion the degree of merit due to a critic who covered himself with glory by stigmatizing the Rector of York as "a lying little fool of a renegade Presbyterian." "It was for this," Mr. Dent tells us in his summing up, "that the inquisition had wreaked its vengeance upon him," with much more ornate denunciation to the same effect. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that Gourlay gives a totally different reason for his prosecution. "What do you think," he said, writing to Mrs. Gourlay after his conviction before the magistrates, "pushed Dickson and these people on to such lengths, but a paragraph in the *London Courier*, stating that I was concerned with Hunt at Spa Fields." And in another place (*General Introduction*, cc, xvi.) he says:—"It was, no doubt, the *Courier's* false report which worked up the frenzy of the poor madman at York; and such was the silliness of many other people they also gave credit to it. To outstare the audacious falsehood, I published in the *Niagara Spectator* the fact that I had

been at Spa Field meeting." On the previous page Gourlay reports the following colloquy which took place at his trial before the magistrates: "Do you know Mr. Cobbett?" "Yes." "Do you know Mr. Hunt?" "Yes." "Were you at Spa Fields meetings?" "Yes." \* \* \* "Were you lately in the United States?" "Yes." The two authorities, Mr. Dent and Mr. Gourlay, differ as to the cause of Gourlay's arrest; and, as Mr. Dent is the more elaborate, he must of course be right; and Mr. Gourlay must be wrong. But for this it might have been supposed that the victim, who was a man who "wanted to know, you know," would have been successful in his enquiries, when he himself was the subject of them.

Sample chapter No. 1, jewel of the volume, is padded and extended and elongated, with fiction, hyperbole and exaggeration, with commination for the most part as unmerited as it is merciless, with snatches of biography and catches of rhyme: by padding, extending and elongating in every conceivable and inconceivable way, the chapter is swelled out to twice ten times Falstaffian proportions. The sample chapter opens in the orthodox style of writers of romance: "In the afternoon of a warm and sultry day, towards the close of one of the warmest and most sultry summers Upper Canada had ever known, an extraordinary trial took place at the Court House in the old town of Niagara." This promise of a "thrilling" report of a great trial is followed by the regulation *mise en scene*, great array of accessories and supernumeraries. Full twenty bits of biography are edged in, and coaxed to swallow up page after page. At page fourteen light seems to dawn; the reader gets the important information that "the twelve jurymen sat in their places to the left of the judge." This is promising; now at least we may expect the trial to proceed. But no, we get instead bits of biography and more biography. The reader plods his devious way to page thirty, when he begins to wonder whether the long promised account of the trial is ever to come. At page thirty-one the prisoner is at last produced; but still the action is provokingly slow. Instead of an account of the trial, now comes a curious bit of scientific information which is nothing less than that a man may be made tipsy by supping a plate of soup, eating a bit of beefsteak, or even by taking a draught of fresh air in a



crowded court-room ! At page thirty-four the prisoner is asked if he is ready for his trial. But before Mr. Dent can allow the trial to proceed, he gives a mortal page of reverie. Of the prisoner he says : " The dead and gone years rose up before him like the scene of a rapidly-shifting panorama." And, when the reverie is over, the judge is about to pass sentence. Finally, the chapter closes at page forty-five, without any rational or intelligible account of the trial which the opening sentence had invited us to witness. A remark is put into the mouth of the judge, which, as objection to its appropriateness cannot be made, Mr. Dent stigmatizes in words borrowed from George Eliot, as " a deep truth uttered by lips that have no right to it." When so much time is spent in all sorts of by-play, and elaborate reveries are made to pass through the alembic of the imagination, it need not excite surprise that some of the essential facts of the " story " are neglected. Mr. Dent deals in surmises as to who set the secret springs of this prosecution in motion. But there was no need for surmise ; the whole truth has been publicly stated on the highest authority, and with a frankness which leaves nothing to conjecture. But, in constructing elaborate reveries, Mr. Dent missed the essential fact.

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The next critique on the book is taken from that high-class, ably-conducted paper, *The Week*. In reference to this article it should be explained that Mr. Dent, the author of the Story, had rushed into print with a short letter over his own name in the *Globe* of October 23rd, 1885, imputing the authorship of a previous review in the *Week* to Mr. Charles Lindsey. Although this review was very fair and temperate in every way, he virtually denied to Mr. Lindsey, as the author of " The Life and Times of William Lyon Mackenzie," the right to criticize " The Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion," and was not above threatening the hypothetical reviewer with direful consequences. This second article in the *Week* is understood to be from the pen of a well-known and distinguished contributor to that newspaper, and appeared on the 19th November, 1885. As an expression of opinion, from a most authoritative and perfectly independent source, it is a valuable addition to the controversy :—

“THE WEEK’S” OPINION.

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We have now been able to read and digest Mr Dent’s History of the Rebellion ; and we must confess ourselves at a loss to understand why he should be so much incensed at the criticisms of our contributor, “Thorpe Mable,” and threaten, if “Thorpe Mable” does it again, to turn literary decorum out of doors and break his head. “Thorpe Mable” gave Mr. Dent credit for industry, for bringing new and interesting matter to light, for popular qualities as a writer. If he declined to give him credit for having said the last word of impartial history, he only withheld that which no intelligent and dispassionate reader will accord. Mr. Dent may have taken the right side ; but he distinctly takes a side, and his tone throughout accords with his feelings. The key-note is struck in the account of the “slow crucifixion” of Gourlay, with which the narrative opens, and is prolonged *crescendo* to the end. Moreover, Mr. Dent fails to see this group of events as it stands in its historic surroundings, and to judge the acts and actors with a fair and comprehensive reference to the circumstances of the period. The old Colonial Constitution was well exchanged, when the fulness of time came, for one of a more liberal kind ; but it was itself liberal for its day, especially when we consider that one moiety of the double colony was a conquest. It was practically not much less liberal than that which, before the reform of Parliament, was enjoyed by the Imperial country. Nor does it seem to have been ill-administered, so far as the governors were concerned : it may reasonably be doubted whether, for the young community, a government of party politicians would have been really better than theirs. An administrative oligarchy, nicknamed the Family Compact, had grown up, kept to itself the spoils of office, and, it seems, abused its power over the Crown Lands. That there was corruption on a colossal scale we find it rather difficult to believe. The “mansions” of the principal members of the Compact are still to be seen, and are of very modest dimensions, while nothing is more certain than that their owners did not leave vast fortunes. The great

political reaction, caused by the French Révolution, and the Napoleonic wars, was succeeded by a tidal wave of liberalism which extended from the Imperial country, where it swept away the Rotten Borough Parliament, to the colony, and for the government of the Crown and its councillors, substituted that of the Colonial Parliament. The past seldom slides smoothly into the future. There was a struggle between the administrators of the old system and the aspirants of the new, in the course of which many violent things were said and some violent things were done : though it is absurd to talk of the wrecking of a printing-press as if it had been a massacre, nor less absurd to accuse a man of "a cruel and dastardly murder" because, in the days of duelling he killed his adversary in a duel. At last there was a sputter of civil war (for that, rather than rebellion, is its proper name), caused, be it observed, not by any act of tyranny on the part of the Governor or the official oligarchy, but by the defeat of the Reformers in a popular election, owing mainly to the publication of an indiscreet letter from Mr. Hume. The page of history being ever chequered, all this might well have been told with philosophic calmness. Of the State Church we are well rid ; but the institution existed in those days everywhere except in the United States, and the Scotch Presbyterians, who were active in pulling it down here, upheld it in their own country ; nay they would have upheld it here if the Anglicans would have gone shares with them in the endowment. That Mr. Dent is bent on exalting Dr. Rolph at the expense of other characters, and notably at the expense of Lyon Mackenzie, whose "mannikin" figure is constantly used to set off the physical, moral and intellectual majesty of the great man, nobody can fail to remark. Mr. Dent has a right to the indulgence of his fancy : these are the days of hero-worship, rehabilitations and historical paradox ; but he cannot expect us all at once to bow down to the image which he has set up, and to trample on the image which he has cast down. He will tell us more about Dr. Rolph in his second volume ; but so far the hero rather wears the aspect of a timid and wary politician, who inspires councils at which he refuses to be present, and is willing that his friends should face the risk of



enterprises which he declines to share. Mr. Dent's book is lively and readable ; no doubt it will have many readers. But it leaves room for a more impartial treatment of the subject. We do not know that "Thorpe Mable" has said more ; and if he has only said this, his head ought not to be in peril.

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## MACKENZIE AND ROLPH.

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A REFORMER'S VIEWS ON MR. DENT'S HISTORY OF THE REBELLION.

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### THE FLAG OF TRUCE EPISODE.

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*Evidence in support of Samuel Lount's Testimony on the Point.*

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WHAT ROBERT BALDWIN THOUGHT OF ROLPH.

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AN INTERESTING CHAPTER OF CANADIAN HISTORY BROUGHT  
UNDER REVIEW.

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The following lengthy and somewhat pungent communication appeared in the *Toronto Daily Mail* of 26th December, 1885. It deals with quite a number of new points not touched upon in any previous criticism, in regard to both Mackenzie and Rolph. The latter is again, as he used to be very often, arraigned at the bar of public opinion as a perfidious friend, and the evidence indicated upon which his guilt was established. The writer is evidently an old Reformer who expresses the views of those most competent to form an opinion on the whole subject treated of in Mr. Dent's story :—

*To the Editor of the Mail :*

SIR,—I write you as one of the "Mackenzie Radicals," sneered at by the author of this "Story," many of whom have lived to see the day when all the great reforms fought for by their leader have triumphed, to protest against the manner in which that "Father

of Reform " is treated by a writer who pretends to be a Liberal. The *Globe*, overlooking the gross injustice which the "Story of the Rebellion" has done William Lyon Mackenzie, and its fulsome eulogies on John Rolph, has thought proper to champion the book as on the whole favorable to the spread of Reform ideas at this time. As a Reformer I can quite understand this motive in a leading party paper, and its unwillingness to say or do anything that will injure the object which it apparently has in view. All the same, it is asking a little too much of Reformers to read and re-read a book that is most repellant to their notions of justice and fair play to one of the greatest Liberal leaders in Canada, and one who certainly was largely instrumental in gaining the victories which Mr. Dent and his too indulgent critics glorify. The purchasers of this expensive subscription "story" are not all unreasoning partisans, and it would be far more Liberal, and in accord with Liberal opinion everywhere, if, while extolling the merits of the work, the *Globe* would at the same time notice its flagrant defects. These latter are rapidly coming to the surface in the press. The policy of silence is a mistaken policy. Misrepresentation and falsehood may prevail for a time, but truth must win in the end. Mackenzie has hosts of friends and admirers who will not suffer his name and memory to be besmirched by an author, under the specious guise of friendship for the cause in which the man whom he defames spent his life, and in which he sacrificed everything that most men count dear. Reformers especially will always feel that the people of Canada owe a deep debt of gratitude to Mackenzie, and that he is well worthy of a most honorable place in any history of the struggle for responsible government.

It is, however, somewhat significant that while applauding Mr. Dent's views on Family Compactism, and the subject matter of the book generally, neither the *Globe* nor any other newspaper has endorsed the author's scurvily mean treatment of the old Reform leader. The *Globe* perhaps feels—and in this it is quite right—that Mackenzie, unlike Rolph, stands in no need of "whitewashing." It may well think, without saying so, that he is too well established in the popular heart, and his work and services too well remembered and appreciated, to be injured at this late day by a writer

who has undertaken to turn history topsy-turvy on this point, and to construct a hero out of a man who never, as long as he lived, cleared himself from the charge of traitorism to Mackenzie and his friends at the most critical moment in the struggle. That charge has been too well proven ever to be doubted, and notwithstanding any service Rolph rendered the Liberal cause, it damaged him irretrievably in popular estimation. Now that a barefaced attempt is being made to canonize him, it is just as well that that little episode in his career should not be forgotten.

#### THE FLAG OF TRUCE.

Rolph, it is well known, was one of the chief instigators of the revolt. He was the Head or the Executive, as it was called, and its principal adviser, but very cunningly showed his hand as little as possible, and took as few of the risks as he could. He first broke faith with his compatriots by changing the day for the rising, and a few days afterwards, when the insurgent force appeared before the city, he had not the courage, like Mackenzie, to head the movement. More than that, although deep in the plans of the "rebels," he was so steeped in duplicity that he accompanied Robert Baldwin, and two other loyal men, to the rebel camp as the bearers of a flag of truce. He was asked to accept this mission, and there is no doubt he did so in order to remove well founded suspicions against himself, and thereby escape arrest. He well knew he was playing a double part the whole time. His appearance as a Government emissary struck consternation into the hearts of the insurgents. They might well believe, as they did, that their cause must be desperate when they saw one of their own trusted leaders in the service of the Government against which they were arrayed.

The evidence taken before the Commission on Treason in December, 1837, supplies overwhelming proof of Rolph's treachery to his friends, and his betrayal both of them and of Baldwin. Poor Samuel Lount, who was with Mackenzie on Yonge Street at the time, and who was shortly afterwards executed, made a sworn statement before the commissioner. Lount said:—"When the flag of truce came up Dr. Rolph addressed himself to me; there

were two other persons with it besides Dr. Rolph and Mr. Baldwin. Dr. Rolph said he brought a message from his Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor to prevent the effusion of blood, or to that effect. At the same time he gave me a wink to walk on one side, when he requested me not to heed the message, but to go on with our proceedings. What he meant was not to attend to the message. Mackenzie observed to me that it was a verbal message, and that it had better be submitted in writing. I took the reply to the Lieutenant-Governor's message to be merely a put-off. I heard all that was said by Dr. Rolph to Mr. Mackenzie, which is above related."

#### CARMICHAEL'S STORY.

When the bearers of the flag of truce appeared the first time—because, as will be seen, they came a second time—they asked the insurgents what they wanted. Believing this message to be a stratagem to gain time, Mackenzie answered that they wanted "independence and a convention to arrange details," that any message from the Governor must be in writing, and that it must be forthcoming in an hour. The bearers of the flag of truce then returned to the city. In about an hour's time they came back again to the rebel camp with the Governor's reply, which was unfavorable. Rolph was with them on both occasions. A man named Hugh Carmichael carried the flag of truce, and, in 1852, Rolph got Carmichael to make this statement:—"During the going out and staying on the ground, and returning to the city, as above stated (all of which was promptly done), Dr. Rolph, Mr. Baldwin and myself, being all on horseback, kept in close phalanx, not a yard apart. Neither of the persons mentioned could have got off his horse, nor could he have winked to Mr. Lount and walked aside and communicated with him, nor have said anything irrelevant to the flag of truce, or against its good faith, as is untruly alleged, without my knowledge." This statement was prepared in Quebec, dated there and sent to Toronto for signature. It was generally believed to have been Rolph's production, and no doubt it was. Frequenters of the old Parliament House may remember Carmichael, who was appointed a messenger, doorkeeper, or something of that sort, when Rolph was afterwards a member of the

Canadian Government. Carmichael's statement just quoted—it seems he made several different statements of the affair—is defective in one very important point ; it does not go the length of saying that, after the flag of truce was at an end by the delivery of the Governor's reply, Rolph did not do and say what Lount says he did, viz., tell Lount to march his men into the city. It matters little when Rolph said this. The question is, Did he say it at all ? Mr. Baldwin's evidence shows clearly that Rolph had ample opportunities to act as he did, and is decidedly contradictory of Carmichael's statement that while “returning to the city” they all three kept together.

#### BALDWIN'S EVIDENCE.

Mr. Baldwin swore before the Commission that, “On the return of the doctor and myself, the second time, with the Lieutenant-Governor's reply that he would not give anything in writing, we found the insurgents at the first toll-gate, and turned aside to the west of Yonge street, where we delivered this answer ; after which Dr. Rolph requested me to wait for him. I did wait some time, *during which he was out of my sight and hearing.* I was then directed to ride westerly. This occupied the time while I was riding at a common walk from Yonge street to the College avenue, probably three-eighths of a mile. The direction to ride westerly, as I then supposed, was for the purpose of the flag being carried to the city by way of the College avenue. Shortly after reaching the avenue, however, I was joined by Dr. Rolph, and we returned together by way of Yonge street. I have no reason to know what communication took place between Dr. Rolph and the insurgents when he was out of my sight and hearing.”

This evidence appears at page 406 of the Legislative Assembly Journals for 1837-8. A man named William Alves, who was with Mackenzie and Lount at the time, stated that when the bearers of the flag of truce returned with the message, Rolph advised the insurgents to go into the city. Another insurgent, P. C. H. Brotherton, swore to the same thing on the 12th December, 1837, before Vice-Chancellor Jameson, saying that Rolph had told him on the 8th that “Mackenzie had acted unaccountably in not coming into the town, and that he expected him in



half an hour after he returned with the flag." Mackenzie and Lount say Rolph's order was given on the first occasion; their two friends, Alves and Brotherton, that it was on the second occasion, and Mr. Baldwin says enough to show that Rolph could easily have done what was charged against him. There are four against two (Rolph and Carmichael) who say positively that it was done, and the statements of the two were not sworn statements. No person of intelligence who has enquired into this matter has ever doubted Rolph's treachery. Old friends of Baldwin know very well what he thought of Rolph's conduct. He always believed and said that Rolph had betrayed him as a personal friend, and after his betrayer fled the country he never again had a friendly communication with him. And yet this is the man whom Mr. Dent exalts as a hero, and glorifies in his book at the expense of William Lyon Mackenzie, whom his hero basely sold!

#### ROLPH'S CHARACTER AND DISPOSITION.

Mr. Dent's description of Rolph is a grandiloquent and ridiculous panegyric. "John Rolph," he says, "was unquestionably one of the most extraordinary personalities who have ever figured in the annals of Upper Canada." That is quite true. A man who, at a vital moment, was a traitor to both his political and personal friends was "unquestionably an extraordinary" sort of man. But besides this he had "a comprehensive, subtle intellect." "Like Bacon he seems to have taken all knowledge to be his province." There is a good deal more of the same fulsome flattery. Then he had also "a noble and handsome countenance," "a voice of silvery sweetness," "a dignity and even majesty in his presence that gave the world assurance of a strong man," "a well rounded chin, a firmly set nose, and a somewhat large and flexible mouth, capable of imparting to the countenance great variety of expression," while "his smile had a winsome sweetness about it." Mr. Dent certainly makes the most of John Rolph's heroic features. But then, we are told, "there was unquestionably a *per contra*." "There was probably no human being who ever possessed John Rolph's entire confidence"; "the quality of caution seems to have been preter-naturally developed within his breast";

he was not "open to the imputation of wearing his heart upon his sleeve"; "never abandoned himself to frolicsomeness or fun"; his indulgence in "heartly laughter" was "a very rare occurrence"; "he could successfully simulate the most contradictory feelings and emotions." So, I may add, could Catiline, who was described as a simulator and a dissimulator. This last characteristic of Mr. Dent's hero was, it seems, shown "in his addresses to juries and public audiences." His panegyrist adds, "one who judged him simply from such exhibitions as these might well have set him down for an emotional and impetuous man, apt to be led away by the fleeting passions and weaknesses of the moment." This is a surprising admission on Mr. Dent's part, because it is what, the author says, Mackenzie was during his whole life. We are next told that this "extraordinary personality" "certainly never acted without a motive." For so extraordinary a personality this was certainly very strange. It seems, however, that "his motives were sometimes dark and unfathomable to everyone but himself," and that "there were depths in his nature which were never fathomed by those nearest and dearest to him—possibly not even himself." This was also extraordinary, and, most people will say, somewhat contradictory. But the riddle is solved when we are told that even Mackenzie regarded the hero "as a Sphinx, close, oracular, inscrutable." Mr. Dent, however, rather puts his foot in it when he says that "not one among his contemporaries was able to take his moral and intellectual measure with anything approaching to completeness; and throughout the entire length and breadth of Canadian biography there is no man of equal eminence respecting whose real individuality so little is known."

#### A PEN PICTURE.

This is not true. The *Globe* was one of Rolph's "contemporaries." It was, as it is still, the leading contemporary organ of the Reform party, and there were able, shrewd men on the staff of that paper who knew a good deal more about Rolph than Mr. Dent knows, or at least more than he chooses to tell us. Taken in connection with some of Mr. Dent's expressions quoted above, the following "moral and intellectual measure" of the great

man is exceedingly suggestive. It appeared in the *Globe* of July, 1854 :—

“He is a sleek-visaged man, of low stature, with cold grey eyes and treacherous mouth, lips fashioned to deceive, and whose mildest lines are such as Nature cuts solely for the passage of insincerities. His countenance seems so complacent—wears an expression so bland and guileless that no person would dare venture to suspect him of anything—even of being an honest man. To the superficial observer, his contour presents a riddle in physiognomy ; but the connoisseur reads studiously—and with feelings of commiseration for the depravity of human nature, he mentally ejaculates,

‘O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath.’

“Deep, dark, designing, cruel, malignant, traitorous, are the deeps revealed to a student. His manners are civil and insinuating ; his conversation soft, sparkling and instructive ; a cold, distrustful sneer and grin (’tis not a smile) plays habitually about his oily lips, while at times there glances forth expressions indicative of polished ferocity of soul, revealing hard and stony depths beneath, that make honest beholders shudder to think that some unfortunate believer in his fair seeming may be doomed to sound and fathom. In short, he is a kind of highly polished human tiger ! Cat-like in his demeanour—tiger-like in the hateful ferocious despotism of his unfeeling soul. One who, as a judge, would pass sentence of death in the polite eloquence of a Frenchman, and with the civil cruelty of a demon. It is thought he is an agile man. He certainly is a slippery one.”

I commend the above portrait to Mr. Dent as a suitable addition to the second volume of his “Story,” and, for the time being, dismiss his hero off the scene.

#### A HISTORIAN’S QUALIFICATIONS.

As a whole this work will be acceptable only in so far as it is reliable. Having heard that its author had once been a writer for the *Globe*, that he was a Liberal in politics, and that the subject would be handled acceptably and satisfactorily to Reformers, I subscribed for the book. Hundreds of others probably did so for the same reasons. It is impossible to say that faith has been kept with us. On all sides I have heard expressions of opinion from members of my own party that this book, which promised so much, has come far short of their expectations, and that it is



in many respects very obnoxious to their feelings and sentiments. I have been a life-long Reformer, never gave other than a Reform vote, and no one can condemn the Family Compact rule more than I do. But when I find the motives, character, and conduct of the real hero of the struggle misrepresented at almost every turn, and the most ludicrous laudations of John Rolph's intellectual, moral and political perfections, I find it hard to believe that Mr. Dent's book is not a mere story book and little else besides—a historical fiction from beginning to end. Certainly when its readers discover grave errors, glaring mis-statements and gross exaggerations in regard to men and things that they had a personal knowledge of, they may well be excused for doubting the reliability of the book with respect to many other things in which they have to trust solely to the author. One's doubts are confirmed when he finds so few references to historical or other authorities outside the standard authorities on the subject. These latter are cited only when they chime in with the writer's prejudices; *e.g.*, to blacken Mackenzie or to whiten Rolph. Apart from these the book is made up almost wholly of Mr. Dent's unsupported opinions, and Mr. Dent must show that he is honest, impartial and just before his unsupported opinions can be considered of any value. He has failed to do this. He is plainly prejudiced very strongly against Mackenzie, and is quite as strongly biassed in favour of Rolph.

#### MR. DENT'S AUTHORITIES.

What confidence, then, can we have in the most of his "Story?" It may be that much that he has written is true, but one must feel that it is the truth if he is to get any real satisfaction out of the truth. Fine writing may be pleasant reading. But it is often inaccurate and untrustworthy. Macaulay is a splendid word painter, but no one accepts Macaulay as a sound historical authority. Like Mr. Dent, he was a thoroughpaced partisan who squared his facts by his violent prejudices. Aping Macaulay now-a-days is rather a perilous pastime. Mr. Dent has used the Whig historian's style of varnish very freely; he throws in no end of florid colouring, and the production generally has a fair exterior.

But like Macaulay's the varnish is the principal ingredient, and is easily rubbed off. We were told that it was to be derived "largely from original sources and documents," but so far we have seen very few of these. Mr. Dent has built up his book "largely" on the writings of Robert Gourlay, which can be got in most old libraries, "The Life and Times of W. L. Mackenzie," by Mr. Lindsay, for many years editor of the old *Conservative Leader*, Governor Francis Bond Head's Narrative, the "Canadian Political Portrait Gallery," and a lot of old newspaper articles thrown off in all the heat and excitement of the struggle—these are the principal authorities cited, and they are certainly not very "original" sources of information. I have read these and much more besides, and it seems to me Mr. Dent selects from them just what suits his purpose and discards the rest. Occasionally, *e. g.*, when he finds a nasty thing in Head's narrative or anywhere else about Mackenzie, or a nice thing there or anywhere else about Rolph, he quotes it in each case. And so it is all through his book where either of those "personalities" is referred to. Everyone knows that Rolph had his enemies as well as Mackenzie, and that he had infinitely fewer friends. A man who had "depths in his nature dark and unfathomable even by himself," who gave his confidence to nobody, whom nobody could understand, whose "lips were fashioned to deceive, and were such as Nature cuts solely for the passage of insincerities," was scarcely the man to give or to gain friendship.

And yet in regard to this man, of whom perhaps as bitter things were said and written as of any man who ever figured in public life, Mr. Dent has not a single line of unfriendly criticism from all this political literature of the past! How can any fair-minded reader approve of suppressions of opinions so notorious, garbling so unmistakeable, and book-making so palpably one-sided?

#### MACKENZIE'S POSITION.

So far as Mackenzie is concerned, it would be hard to find anywhere a meaner and more niggardly tribute to an able, unselfish and patriotic public man. According to Mr. Dent Mackenzie's "itch for notoriety" was the guiding star of his whole life. His

personal appearance, mental endowments, political judgment, intelligence and services, as well as his honesty and disinterestedness, are similarly misrepresented. Nor is the writer's method of doing this at all creditable. It is generally done by contrasts and comparisons most invidious, by references to the idle gossip of street acquaintances, and by disingenuous suggestion and pitiful innuendoes. "An insinuation," Mr. Dent should know, "is the refuge of a coward." Mackenzie, unlike Rolph, was not perfect; he had faults and he never concealed them. It cannot be said of him, as the *Globe* said of the "extraordinary personality," that he had "dark, designing, traitorous deeps revealed" in his nature; he truly wore his heart upon his sleeve. He was not an out-and-out party man because he was too independent, and hence he was sometimes at loggerheads with the would-be runners of the "political machine." When he thought his allies were wrong he said so frankly and above board. There was no double-dealing about him; he was a loyal, true friend, and an open, manly opponent, and never, like Mr. Dent's patent hero, stabbed either friend or foe in the dark. There is no doubt he was a hard hitter when he was roused; so is any public man worthy the name; but he was withal kind-hearted, forgiving, and generous to a fault. Some of his warmest personal friends and admirers were Conservatives, who could appreciate his true worth, if they could not approve of his political course.

#### MACKENZIE'S PLATFORM.

Altogether Mr. Dent's opinions of Mackenzie are sorry compliments to the intelligence of his readers. "His views," he says, "would now be considered Toryish and out of date," in the face of the fact known to any schoolboy, that they are now universally accepted by both political parties, and largely embodied in the legislation of the country. It is insinuated that he entered public life from the most sordid of motives—a man who was a life-long foe to venality in every form, who more than once was offered a lucrative office under the Government, and who resented all such offers as attempts to control his independence. Then we are told that he was a mere creature of impulse and circumstances, who

could "be blown hither and thither by any strong current," and who "from his cradle to his grave was never fit to walk alone through any great emergency!" And this against the acknowledged fact that mainly through his self-reliant exertions, steadfastly and determinedly pursued, and with false friends like Rolph to hamper him, the great reforms for which he struggled were carried long years before they possibly could have been in the ordinary course of events. If there ever was a man who had fixed and uncompromising views of public policy and public affairs it was Mackenzie. And yet it is said that "the instability of his opinions" was "one of his most dangerous characteristics," and that he was as changeable as a "chameleon." When ever before was such arrant nonsense dignified by the name of "history?" Those who knew the man, and the transparent, unbending honesty of his whole life in word and deed, are also asked to believe that "his unsupported testimony is of very little value," and that "his word" could not be "credited." I wonder how far Mr. Dent will be "credited," or "his unsupported testimony" taken in the face of such an unblushing falsehood? He is, however, just as veracious in regard to Mackenzie's labours and influence as a legislator, and what he calls his "misty conceptions of statesmanship." Mr. Dent slurs these over as mere matters of "detail," suppressing, as he does, in regard to many important facts in Mackenzie's public life, the instructive records of parliament showing his thorough acquaintance with all the great political questions of his day, and his initiation and comprehensive knowledge of the largest measures of legislative policy. But the climax is reached by this Liberal story-teller when, with cool effrontery, he tells us that, "as to any real influence" in the House of Assembly, Mackenzie "had no more than the junior messenger!" It is plain that Mr. Dent does not stick at trifles. He has unlimited faith in the gullibility of his readers and their capacity for mendacious cram.

#### THE "UNLETTERED."

Mackenzie's influence in the country, he says, was of just as little account. At one time it was confined to "the unlettered yeomen of Wentworth," at another to "the unlettered farmers and recently

arrived immigrants." At one time "the farmers and mechanics" were his "satellites," at another "the rural and uneducated portion of the community." And then we are told of his "origin," "social grade," etc., and the Canadian Macaulay's picture of "the noisy little firebrand" and his "unlettered" followers is complete. All this is really very dreadful; to the highly refined intellect and high born soul of this cultured man of letters, it is unspeakably shocking. Mr. Dent is constantly parading Mackenzie's want of tact, discretion and judgment, yet one would have supposed that in thus winning his way and extending his influence among the masses of the Canadian people, he was not altogether devoid of worldly wisdom. If Mr. Dent had read history to any purpose—if he had studied it as well as he has studied human nature ill, he would have discovered that amongst politicians and public men there is a good deal of consorting with the "unlettered" farmer and mechanic. It may seem very strange to Mr. Dent, but it is nevertheless a fact that they are a power in the country. Leaders of men, who respect public opinion, consult and consider them, and horrifying as it may be to Mr. Dent, they will continue doing so to the end of time. No man in his day did it more successfully than Mackenzie, because he was in thorough sympathy with the people. He had faith in them and they in him, because they knew how unselfish and patriotic his motives were. He believed in trusting them, and gloried in being the champion of their rights, and in making their cause his own.

These supercilious sneers by Mr. Dent at the "social grade" of an old Liberal leader and those who were proud to follow him—their intelligence, their worthy employments, and their honest toil, require no answer. They are simply pitiable, and coming from a professed Liberal, show how utterly unfitted he is to write the history of a popular struggle. Weak-minded persons, who fancy they have a pedigree, sometimes exhibit their weakness in this way; but it is more often exhibited by unmitigated snobs, or persons who have no pedigree at all. From what I have heard of Mr. Dent's antecedents he can hardly afford to sneer at the "social grade" of any person. Mackenzie, it is well known, never



set much store on birth or lineage, and he had no reason to feel ashamed of his own. His father was a poor man like the fathers of hundreds of men in this country who have risen to the highest positions. His mother was related to some of the first families in the Highlands of Scotland, but of this he never made a boast. Unlike Mr. Dent, he loved and honoured men for their sterling manhood, no matter how high or humble their origin might have been. Any person aspiring to be a public teacher and instructor, who writes in such a strain, will speedily find his level, and I am much mistaken if Mr. Dent has not greatly lowered himself in public estimation—assuming that he has any “social” status from which to fall—by this gratuitous display of snobbishness.

Yours, etc.,

A REFORMER.

OTTAWA, *December 24th.*

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### MACKENZIE AND ROLPH.

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The pen and ink sketch from the *Globe* of July, 1854, quoted in the above communication, seems to have revived old memories of the men of '37, and the estimation in which they were held by the Reform press of succeeding years. It called forth the following interesting letter from “Another Reformer,” who quotes again from the *Globe* in a letter to that journal from its chief representative in the Press Gallery of the old House of Assembly at Quebec. It seems the correspondent of the leading Liberal newspaper knew Rolph well. The latter is here descried fleeing from the country, and from those whom he had shamelessly betrayed, and effecting his release from arrest in a thoroughly characteristic fashion.—

*To the Editor of The Mail.*

SIR,—To what was said on this subject by “Reformer,” whose letter you published on Saturday, perhaps you would be good enough to add what the *Globe's* parliamentary correspondent said when the subject of the flag of truce was brought up in Parliament at Quebec. The letter, dated “Quebec, Wednesday, Nov. 3, 1852,” is accredited “*From Our Own Correspondent*” :—

“ Previous to the regular business of the House commencing yesterday, Mr. Mackenzie informed the Speaker, in his place, that he had a personal matter to bring up. The gallery, as I informed you yesterday, was cleared; and he then went on to say, that Dr. Rolph had procured a certificate of one Hugh Carmichael, and published it in the *Quebec Gazette*, to the effect that he (Dr. Rolph) had not acted in the manner, on the occasion of the well-known flag of truce in 1837, which he had been accused of—his former principal accuser being Mr. Lount, who was executed, and his latter Mr. Mackenzie himself. Mr. Mackenzie then stated, in substance, that all that Mr. Lount had stated, and more, was strictly true; that Dr. Rolph was the *Executive* of the insurrectionists in 1837, of whom Mr. Mackenzie was one of the leaders, at Gallows Hill; that all he had directed to be done was done; he being obeyed in all things as the *Executive*, and looked up to as director; that on the occasion of the flag of truce, he did tell—after the more formal message was delivered in presence of Mr. Baldwin—Mr. Lount to come into Toronto at once, for the people were frightened, and the place could be taken. Whatever name such an act might be called by, or however Dr. Rolph might seek to shield himself, by false statements, from the responsibility of it, these, he alleged, were the facts; and no certificate, subterfuge, or falsehood, could make them otherwise.

“ Dr. Rolph denied the whole. This, of course, he must have made up his mind to do when he got the certificate.

“ But how a man—who evidently feels keenly the black dishonour, or, at least, the deadly dislike and distrust that all honourable men must have of him after so vile an act—could be such an arrant fool as to risk an investigation into it upon so slight a ground for ultimate acquittal as the certificate of this man Carmichael, I cannot conceive. It is but another instance, however, of the thousands on record, of the weakness of a man who was guilty; and the absolute certainty there is of his very attempts to conceal his crime, leading to his detection. *What did he run away for if he did not know that he was guilty of what Mr. Lount, before his execution, charged him with?* The writer of this letter met him at Oakville when he was flying; and his excuse for leaving Toronto

was, that he was going to see a sister, who was ill ; and when he was arrested, and brought back by the guard, he said, ‘Oh, you will surely not think of suspecting me when Sir Francis Head, your Governor, entrusted me with a flag of truce?’ He was, in consequence, at once released. Now, if he did not feel that he had played a perfidious part, why was he flying after he had been entrusted with a flag of truce? But why, a rebel himself, and the instigator of those who were—the *Executive*, as Mr. Mackenzie calls him—why did he hypocritically and villainously smile in Sir Francis Head’s face, and pledge his sacred honour to the citizens of Toronto, that he was against the rebellion—*yet convey, for these citizens, a flag of truce to men with whom he was in league ; men who were but obeying his instructions ; men who were but invested with his own spirit ?* And what more natural than that these men, seeing him with a flag of truce from their enemy, should like to know what he meant by it ! And what more natural, too, than his telling Mr. Lount privately what to do ; and what, that unhappily misguided man—just before his execution—said he did tell him ! What would these men think when they saw Dr. Rolph, their chief and their reliance, in the service of their foe ? Would they not seek an explanation ? Would he not have endeavoured to explain ? What more true than the few horrid words, behind Mr. Baldwin’s back, of instruction to Mr. Lount ?

“Miserable, degraded, false-hearted sneak, you are caught. You have put upon record what will provoke inquiries, which will sear you as with a rod of iron. Yes, and it is left for you to be not only the despised of honour, loyalty and truth, but to be a detested recreant to your brother criminals ! Go, however, and dine, and smile, and advise with Lord Elgin. He has helped to make you the guardian of Britain’s chivalry and loyalty in America, and it may be proper to add, that he should, at least, have all the honour of it.

“After this explanation of Mr. Mackenzie’s—for which he will be duly persecuted, and at the same time fully believed—there was a long debate upon resolutions introduced by Mr. Hincks, to secure the Government guarantee to a railroad down to *Trois Pistoles*, on the St. Lawrence, from here.”



The view of the *Globe's* correspondent regarding the transaction is that of Reformers generally. Ever after the affair of the flag of truce Rolph was generally known as *the* traitor—the Benedict Arnold of his party. The prediction of the writer of the *Globe* that Mackenzie would be “duly persecuted and at the same time fully believed,” has proved literally true; but he could scarcely have foreseen that there would be found instruments base enough to pursue the work of detraction beyond the grave.

Yours, etc.,

ANOTHER REFORMER.

NEWMARKET, Dec. 28th, 1885.

AN OLD REFORMER RETURNS TO THE MACKENZIE  
ROLPH MATTER.

A REPLY TO MR. T. J. ROLPH.

The next contribution to the controversy was another communication from “A Reformer” at Ottawa, whose former letter had been falsely ascribed by Mr. T. J. Rolph to Mr. Lindsey. (*See Appendix.*) This appeared in the *Mail* of January 4th, 1886. It corroborates Mr. Lindsey’s denial, fully exonerates him from any responsibility for the writer’s previous letter, and deals with all the points worth noticing in Mr. Rolph’s letter:—

*To the Editor of The Mail.*

SIR,—The *Globe* of Thursday last contains a letter from Mr. T. J. Rolph, in which the writer charges Mr. Charles Lindsay, the author of “The Life and Times of William Lyon Mackenzie,” with being “the responsible author” of my communication published in THE MAIL of the 26th ult. The letter is not very original either in matter or style. But as its inditor has shown no discretion in assailing an innocent person, his mode of doing so is of little moment. He repeatedly borrows and adopts as his own expressions used by me in my communication, and is other-

wise a mere angry echo of Mr. Dent in his "Story of the Rebellion." It is plain that, in more ways than one, "the voice is Jacob's voice, but the hand is the hand of Esau." Mr. T. J. Rolph, it seems, is a son of Dr. John Rolph—the "extraordinary personality" and "strong man" of the story—and I am told he is a lawyer by profession. It is quite natural that he should seek to defend his father, and had he done so in a proper spirit I should not have replied to his letter. But he has robbed himself, and the subject of his defence, of all sympathy, by his wanton recklessness of assertion and utter disregard of the truth. It is no part of my present business to defend Mr. Lindsay, whose talents and abilities as a literary man are widely known and acknowledged. That gentleman is quite able to defend himself, and to make his assailant regret rushing headlong into a controversy for which Mr. Dent is solely to blame. In justice to Mr. Lindsay, however, I desire at once to say that this reckless young lawyer's badly drawn indictment against him is utterly false and unfounded. Mr. Lindsay had as much to do with my communication as Mr. Rolph himself. He did not write it or cause it to be written, nor did he inspire, prompt or instigate it, either directly or indirectly. If Mr. Rolph is a gentleman he will at once retract his dishonest charge, and properly apologize to the gentleman whom he has foully maligned.

I have also a few words, on my own account, to address to this double-voiced and indiscreet young man. He speaks of my letter as "one of the most disgraceful and unwarranted attacks on the memory of the dead that has characterized journalism in this country for the last half century." These be brave words, and if Mr. Dent's detraction of "the memory of the dead" Mackenzie had been included in his anathemas, there would have been some truth in them. Mr. Rolph's knowledge of Canadian journalism is evidently not very extended. He can carry it about with him without much trouble, and, for the future, I would advise him to be a little more guarded in writing about matters which he does not understand. With his prompter and inspirer, Mr. Dent, at his back, the least said by either of them about disgraceful journalism the better. The dastardly attacks on public and

private character which appeared in the *Toronto News*, in the first days of its existence, are not yet forgotten. I am told that some of these were the product of Mr. Dent's pen. I must also remind Mr. Rolph that all that has been said, or that may hereafter be said, in the public press in regard to his father, has been provoked by Mr. Dent. The Story-teller has forced the issue by his indefensible slanders and lampooneries of Mackenzie, and his gushing and ridiculous flattery of Dr. Rolph. The very edition of the *Globe* which published the young man's foolish letter candidly admits this. Referring to the letter the editor says:—"In another column will be found a letter replying to letters which have appeared in another journal concerning the connection of Dr. Rolph with the rebellion of 1837. That such a controversy should have arisen was inevitable, however much it may be regretted." In fact the *Globe* itself is one of the most formidable antagonists that the great Rolphite apostle and his young disciple have to encounter. The severest part of my last communication was taken from one of the numbers of that journal of July, 1854. The extract was quoted in reply to Mr. Dent's statement as to none of Dr. Rolph's contemporaries being able to take his "moral and intellectual measure." As I knew the *Globe* had measured him pretty accurately, I thought I would turn up the record. And there it is in black and white. The same extract appeared in the *Citizen* newspaper of this city on the 14th November last, and excited some comment at the time. It revived in my mind the generally accepted estimate, by the great body of Reformers in Canada, of John Rolph's political crookedness and base treachery. That estimate will be hard to disturb, and Mr. Dent is not the man to do it. The *Globe's* pen and ink portrait was not complimentary, but it was life-like, and it had the solid substratum of truth to rest upon, which is more than can be said of a large part of the Story-book. Why this piteous whine in print by the Story-teller and his mouthpiece, the young lawyer? Mr. Dent has been dragging the sea of political literature with his net for anything and everything to make Mackenzie odious in the eyes of the world. He has made the most of his catch, such as it is. He has undoubtedly found much infinitely more damaging to Dr. Rolph,

but he has not had the manliness or honesty to say a word about it. Yet Mackenzie's friends must grin and bear all this with equanimity ! They must rake nothing from the ashes of the past, and must be dumb as an oyster ! Or, if they resent it, as it well deserves, a long whining complaint must be poured into the public ear about "justice" and "fair play !" Has this exceedingly innocent young man never heard of jug-handled justice ?

Mr. Lindsay's biography of Mackenzie is also assailed in the same reckless style by the *Globe's* sapient young critic. I am not concerned about defending it, except in so far as it bears on my last communication and supports my statements. As a historical and literary work it must, like Mr. Dent's, stand or fall on its merits. If time be any test of its value, it has stood the test well. Although published in 1860, in Dr. Rolph's lifetime, its accuracy, truthfulness, and honesty have never before been impeached. It has maintained a place in Canadian history for over twenty-five years. Any person who has read the two works (Lindsay's and Dent's) with any care must have been struck with the bold freedom with which Mr. Dent borrows from this biography. In fact he often uses the very same expressions in describing the same incidents. It is plain to any discerning reader that he is greatly indebted to Mr. Lindsay's book (in fact he often quotes it approvingly in his Story) for information disclosed in his own, that he has founded his work very largely upon this biography, and that were it not for the industry and research shown in its pages the gaudy, padded out superstructure reared by himself would have been a much more rickety concern than it is. Sir Francis Hincks, in the "Reminiscences of his Public Life," speaks of the biography of Mackenzie as trustworthy. He had every means of satisfying himself on this point, and no one can doubt that he was perfectly honest in his statements about it. Yet we find young Mr. Rolph in his letter referring to the biography as "replete with errors of fact and detail," as "fictitious," and as "bolstering up Mackenzie's reputation" with forgeries ! To say nothing of his audacity, this is exceedingly rich. But is the person who addresses the public in this reckless fashion not aware that he is playing with edge tools ?

So far as the flag of truce episode is concerned, it is very evident that the whole truth as against Rolph has not yet been told. This appears from the letter of your Newmarket correspondent. Rolph is therein described as a fugitive fleeing for his life, begging for release from arrest on the plea that he was a loyal man—one of the bearers of the Government flag of truce—and excusing his hasty flight to a political friend on the score of the illness of a relative! The extract from the *Globe's* parliamentary correspondent, in November, 1852, published in that letter, also shows what the leading organ of the Reform party then thought of Rolph. It was far from flattering. The extract in my former communication, from the *Globe* of July, 1854, proves that in the interval he had sunk still lower in the estimation of the Reform party, and that he was at about as low an ebb in their respect and confidence as it was possible for any public man to be. These extracts from the leading Liberal newspaper of Canada are infinitely more cutting and severe than anything I have said about Dr. Rolph; they corroborate and confirm all that I said, all that Baldwin and the others, mentioned in my letter, said about him, and show that my letter, instead of being “a disgraceful and unwarranted attack” on Dr. Rolph, was not only perfectly justifiable, but far milder and more lenient than it might have been. Mr. Lindsay, in his biography of Mackenzie, has been even more generous to the father of his recent assailant; in fact when his book appeared it was a matter of surprise to Reformers, and a subject of animadversion by many, that Rolph had been let down so easily. The little that is said by Mr. Lindsay is said temperately, but it contains the elements of a direct charge of treachery on the part of Rolph to Mackenzie and his friends; it produces evidence in support of the charge; “the testimony of witnesses,” that young Mr. Rolph in his letter says “will completely refute and overthrow” the charge, could then have been easily got; Dr. Rolph himself was then living and lived for years afterwards; and yet from that day to this that charge—one of the blackest and most dishonouring that could be made against any man—has never been answered, much less refuted. And I make bold to say that it never will be.



The statement by Mr. Rolph that many of the patriots of '37 were "basely misrepresented and maligned by Mackenzie" is on a par with the rest of his letter. It is too puerile and absurd to notice, and carries its refutation on its face. The writer fails to give a tittle of evidence in its support, and, like the unsupported opinions of Mr. Dent, his bare assertion is worthless. The patriots of '37 were, and always continued to be, Mackenzie's staunchest friends. The relations between him and them were always of the most friendly and affectionate nature, and to this day, the men of that time, who were identified with him, can scarcely mention his name without evincing an emotion which speaks volumes for the love and admiration which he inspired in their hearts. This "consistency," if we except the marvellous "consistency" of their betrayer, John Rolph, was never called in question either by Mackenzie or his biographer, as is suggested in this young man's letter. The loyalty between them and their old leader was mutual and lasting. It was strengthened by their common sufferings and sacrifices; and so far from being abated, it was only intensified as the years rolled on, and they saw that their once "lost cause" was fully vindicated by their united struggles, and that its principles were triumphant in the permanent establishment of responsible government.

Mr. Rolph speaks of the nature of the correspondence between his father and Mr. Baldwin up to 1849, as enabling him to contradict my statement "that Mr. Baldwin never spoke to Dr. Rolph after the pretended violation of the Flag of Truce in 1837." I made no such statement, and, with my letter before him, Mr. Rolph knew I did not. I said there was no "friendly communication" between them, and I say so still. When this much vaunted "correspondence" is forthcoming, the public can judge from the nature of it as to who is in the right. I say here confidently, in advance of its production, that what I have already said on that point will be literally verified. Rolph very probably tried, in his wily fashion, to explain away his traitorism to the friends who had once trusted him, and whom he heartlessly deceived. He did so to others, and to the Assembly at Quebec in 1852, when the question was discussed with closed doors, and when Mackenzie nailed the



accusation against him on the floor of the House. "Correspondence" of that kind with Baldwin can scarcely be called "friendly communications." Neither can formal or business letters between two men whom an act of treachery—never forgiven on Baldwin's part—had alienated. No, Robert Baldwin, like all the Reformers of his day, had too strong and conclusive proofs of Rolph's dishonour ever to treat him as a friend again, and he certainly never was so treated.

As to the further assertion, in this letter, that Mackenzie, in 1852, publicly declared that he had taken no part, "civil or military," in the insurrection, and had "merely acted as an individual friendly to a change in the Canadas"—we shall see, when the whole case is presented, what this pretended inconsistency on Mackenzie's part amounts to. Garbled quotations of Mackenzie's public declarations are not evidence. There has been so much garbling already in Mr. Dent's description of his public conduct and career, that I may be forgiven for believing that the same sort of shamelessness will be continued to the end of this precious historical romance. Mackenzie, as everyone knows, never denied the part which he had taken in the revolt; he manfully accepted his full share of the responsibility; and he was made to feel it in his long years of bitter exile. And I am greatly mistaken if the public opinion of to-day, and the public opinion of the future, do not mark in a signal manner their condemnation of the conduct of a writer, professedly Liberal, who seeks to heap obloquy on the dead patriot's grave.

I have now done with this youthful indiscretion of revising the Canadian "journalism" and political history of the past. I have given the letter a somewhat lengthy consideration for obvious reasons. "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hand is the hand of Esau."

Yours, etc.,

A REFORMER.

OTTAWA, *Jan. 1.*

*ROLPH AND MACKENZIE.*

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At this point the discussion takes a new and rather unexpected turn for the Rolphites. Mr. T. T. Rolph's letter (*see appendix*), in which Mackenzie was assailed so maliciously, had been just four days in print. It excited, as we believe, the strongest indignation and resentment, and called forth the following letter from Mr. John King, Barrister, Berlin, a son-in-law of Mackenzie. The war is here carried into Africa. In his perusal of the Rolph papers, Mr. Dent is shown to have discovered "the most damning proofs of Rolph's treachery," and the larger question of the honesty and good faith of the author's narrative is thus distinctly opened up. The circumstances are clearly set forth, and proof is offered, if necessary, in support of Mr. King's statement. This letter appeared in the *Mail and World* of January 9th, 1886 :—

*To the Editor of the Mail.*

SIR,—I would gladly refrain from interfering in a controversy respecting Dr. Rolph's connection with the rebellion of 1837-38, but the violent letters to the *Globe* of his son (*see appendix*), Mr. T. T. Rolph, in which the writer denies his father's treachery to Mackenzie, and makes a counter-charge of wholesale treachery against Mackenzie himself, compel me to give to the public information of a most material nature on the question. It seems that, with a view to his writing the "Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion," the author, Mr. Dent, had placed in his hands Dr. Rolph's private papers relating to the movement. These he perused, and I am credibly informed that, in the course of his perusal of them, he fell upon evidence which perfectly convinced him of Dr. Rolph's guilt. He, as I am advised and as I fully believe, told my informant that he had discovered in those papers the most damning proofs of Rolph's treachery to Mackenzie. My informant is a gentleman of acknowledged abilities, well-known reputation and undoubted veracity, whose word, I think, even Mr. Dent will not question. He told me what I have stated under circumstances which entirely rebut any imputation of unfriendliness to Mr. Dent, or of a breach of private confidence on his own part, and I have his authority for making the statement. This information has been in my possession for a long time

past. I was loth to make use of it against a gentleman whom I have known for many years, and with whom I have always held the most friendly relations, until, as the public have seen, toleration of venomous attacks on Mackenzie's name and memory has ceased to be a virtue on the part of any of his friends or relatives. Although I have made the disclosure under great provocation, it is made solely in the interests of truth and justice. In giving it publicity at this time, I feel I am not chargeable in any way with unfairness to Mr. Dent. His first volume of the "Story of the Rebellion," shows very plainly that he has accepted a brief as a professional writer in the Rolph interest, with all that that means, and that he intends to do his best to earn his retainer. The letters which Mr. T. T. Rolph has written to the *Globe* bear the impress of being inspired by him, and clearly indicate that Mackenzie is to be pursued to the end of the "Story" with even greater injustice and calumny than have marked the pages of the first volume.

On some future occasion I shall ask the Toronto press to do me the favour of publishing a letter dealing more fully with Mr. Dent's narrative. There will at all times, I have no doubt, be manhood enough in Canada to vindicate William Lyon Mackenzie, if vindication be at all necessary against his defamers. Meanwhile, I may surely ask my brother Liberals and the Liberal press—the press of all parties—to see to it that a spirit of generous fair play and just consideration be shown to a man whose patriotic services, sufferings and sacrifices are, I believe, not yet forgotten by his country.

Yours, etc.,

JOHN KING.

BERLIN, *January 7.*

## THE MACKENZIE-ROLPH CONTROVERSY.

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It seems the above letter was also sent to the *Globe* for publication. It did not appear in that journal on account of the editor's having previously shut down on the controversy with the second letter of Mr. T. T. Rolph. Mr. King's letter was, however, made the subject of a short article in the *Globe* of the 11th January, 1886, in which a kindly, well-meant endeavour was made to smooth over the whole matter, and pour oil on the troubled waters. In stating the question at issue the writer said, "It is interesting to note that the whole controversy is as to who was most active and influential in opposition to the Family Compact." This remark, and the article as a whole, called forth the following second letter from Mr. King to the *Daily World* of January 13th, 1886 :—

*To the Editor of the World.*

The *Globe* of to-day has an article under this heading in which it refers to a letter received from me—a triplicate of that published in the *Mail* and *World* of Saturday. It says "that the whole controversy is as to who was most active and influential in opposition to the Tory Family Compact." That, I respectfully submit, is not what the controversy was about.

The real question is, whether the charge of treachery to Mackenzie, Baldwin and their friends, preferred by a correspondent of the *Mail* against Dr. Rolph, is well founded. The *Mail's* correspondent produced evidence in support of his statements. Mr. T. T. Rolph, evidently speaking for Mr. Dent, the author of the "Story of the Rebellion," as well as for himself, and without offering a scintilla of evidence in reply, denied the charge *in toto*, and brought a counter charge of universal treachery against Mackenzie. It was this last statement particularly which called forth my letter in which I alleged, on good authority, that Mr. Dent had found in Dr. Rolph's private papers "the most damning proofs of Rolph's treachery to Mackenzie."

The controversy has in fact broadened out into a question of the honesty and good faith of the author and his narrative. If Mr. Dent found such proofs of Rolph's treachery, and I am satisfied he did, no language is too strong, even at this stage of the

"Story," in condemnation of the author and his book. I don't think Mackenzie was faultless, but I do say that he has been most unfairly dealt with in this narrative, and I shall very soon convince the public of this, if they are not fully convinced already. I shall also have something to say about John Rolph, the only perfect personage in Mr. Dent's gallery of "personalities."

I agree with the *Globe* that "different views may with perfect honesty be held over the relative merits of two such men." But what should be said about Mr. Dent's "honesty," in view of the statements in my last letter that are as yet unanswered

BERLIN, *January 11.*

JOHN KING.

The above letter was written, as would appear from its date, on the 11th January, 1886, the same day on which the *Globe's* editorial appeared. The next issue of that journal contained the following paragraph amongst its editorial "Notes and Comments":—

"With respect to the article on Mackenzie and Rolph in the *Globe* of yesterday, Mr. Dent writes us to say that he is too much occupied, with hard work upon the second volume of his Story, to reply to the numberless attacks upon him which have appeared in the columns of a contemporary. He, however, gives the most emphatic denial to the statements in a letter which appeared in the *Mail* of Saturday last, to the effect that he admitted having found among Dr. Rolph's papers conclusive evidence of the Doctor's treachery. He expresses his intention of dealing with the other charges contained in that letter before another forum."

### THE MACKENZIE-ROLPH CONTROVERSY.

The above paragraph in the *Globe* was not allowed to pass. It was replied to by Mr. King in the following third letter published in the *Mail* and *World* of January 15th, 1886. The writer here gives his authority for his statement, previously made, that Mr. Dent had discovered amongst



the Rolph papers "the most damning proofs of Rolph's treachery." He also fully exculpates his informant, Dr. Bingham, of Waterloo, from any improper breach of private confidence with respect to Mr. Dent :—

*To the Editor of the Mail.*

SIR,—I notice that Mr. Dent indirectly, through to-day's *Globe*, "gives the most emphatic denial to the statements in my letter, which appeared in the *Mail* and *World* of Saturday last, to the effect that he admitted having found among Dr. Rolph's papers conclusive evidence of the doctor's treachery." I have now to say that I was told the admission, as I stated it, was made to Dr. Bingham, of Waterloo, who is my informant in the matter. In justice to that gentleman, who is a very old friend of Mr. Dent's, I should explain that the information was given to me without the slightest desire or intention to injure or prejudice Mr. Dent in any way. On the contrary, it was disclosed with the view of removing what the doctor thought was a misapprehension, on the part of another member of the family and myself, of the attitude likely to be assumed by Mr. Dent in his book in regard to Mackenzie and Rolph. We had at the time, for various reasons, formed the opinion that the "Story of the Rebellion" would be unfriendly to the one and exceedingly favourable to the other, and, in a conversation with Dr. Bingham on the subject, we expressed that opinion. He at once took the part of his friend, said he was sure from what Mr. Dent had told him about the Rolph papers that we were under a false impression in regard to Mr. Dent's intentions, and, in order to disabuse our minds of the feeling which we entertained, he made the statements referred to in my letter of Saturday last. Nothing could be more evident than that he wished to place Mr. Dent in a favourable light. We were, I must confess, more or less reassured by what we were told, but you may judge of our painful surprise when the book itself appeared, and was followed up by Mr. T. T. Rolph's letters to the *Globe* foreshadowing, to a certain extent, the scope of the second volume. An indictment for wholesale treachery against Mackenzie was plainly indicated in those letters, and certainly that was something that could not be lightly overlooked. While I must not, from anything I have written, be understood



as imputing any mere mercenary motives to Mr. Dent in the stand which he has taken with respect to Mackenzie and Rolph, I know I am not alone in the opinion, already expressed, that he is employing his pen in the Rolph interest. He has a perfect right to do so, but, if he voluntarily undertakes such a task, he has no right to expect immunity from hostile criticism. Dr. Bingham, I feel assured, stands ready to make good his statement.

Yours, etc.,

JOHN KING.

BERLIN, *January 12.*

To the above letter no reply has ever yet appeared from Mr. Dent.

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### THE MEN OF THE REBELLION.

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The two following extracts are from the *Toronto World* of October 5th, 1885. After speaking of Mr. Dent's treatment of the leaders of the Family Compact, it goes on to show how grave an error the author has made in trying to detract from Mackenzie's position as the true champion of the cause of the people, and says :—

Let us turn to the other side, the leaders of the Reform party. If Mr. Dent has ruffled the feathers of descendants of the Family Compact, he has equally upset the conceptions that men held of the prominent Reformers. What the second volume will develop we do not know ; but, in the first, there is ample evidence that, according to the author, Mr. Rolph and Robert Baldwin were, if not the leaders of the rebellion—“ an ill-planned and feebly conducted movement ”—they were at least the true champions of the cause of the people. Public opinion long ago made William Lyon Mackenzie the hero of the cause of the struggle ; we shall see what success attends the historian who proposes to reverse this recognized order. Already the champions of Mackenzie are furbishing up their armour, and, from what we know of them, they will not die without a struggle.      \*      \*      \*

Our only commentary, for the present, on Mr. Dent's portraits of these men is that, if Mackenzie was as he draws him, and Rolph and Baldwin were the men he paints them, why then did they not so size him and keep him in his place? How was it that "the little proletarian" got the stars?

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Next day there appeared in the same paper the following spirited letter:—

*MACKENZIE AND ROLPH.*

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*To the Editor of the World.*

Of all the Reviews of Dent's Story of the Rebellion yours is the only one that dares touch the real purpose of the book: the setting up of Rolph in the place held by Mackenzie. I am the son of an old rebel, and my training and information go to show that Mackenzie was the one man, of the Reform leaders in those trying times, who had the *courage* to act. Mackenzie had faults, many of them, but he had the courage to do, and it is because of that that he is the hero of the people's rights. Flaws can be picked in anyone's character; courage in supreme moments falls to few; Mackenzie happened to be one of those few.

VAUGHAN BOY.

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*A ROMAN CATHOLIC OPINION.*

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*From the Irish Canadian of January 15th, 1886.*

In dealing with these [Mackenzie, Baldwin and others] our author [Mr. Dent] seems to regard Mackenzie as if with aversion. We regret this exceedingly, for we believe that the depreciation of Mackenzie's abilities is undeserved; and that no matter what our author may say derogatory to the personal habits and character of the "little Scotchman," the latter will always be regarded as the head and front of the movement which culminated in the obtainment of the liberties now enjoyed by the people of Canada.

*THE NEW "STORY OF THE UPPER CANADIAN  
REBELLION."*

—  
A PROSE EPIC REVELATION.  
—

In common with others who subscribed for the work, I have read with curious interest Mr. John Charles Dent's "Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion." It is not the first narrative of a historical or semi-historical character which has reviewed that period in our history. Nor will it be the last. The materials for even a prose epic on the subject—for such the author seeks to make it—are neither few nor far between. There is abundance of sources whence an impartial hand may draw as it needs. Despite this, the story is to all intents and purposes a new story. To all who have studied the causes and progress of the movement, or who knew the prominent personages who figured therein, it will be a marvellous revelation. With respect to these latter, Mr. Dent does not accept the popular gospel of the struggle. He appears not only as a skeptic but as a denouncer of the old faith, fortified by authority, which has been handed down to the Liberals of to-day in regard to William Lyon Mackenzie. He proclaims, with much unction, a new and startling creed in regard to John Rolph. To accomplish this required rare ingenuity, and the writer has shown that he is endowed with that gift in a remarkable degree. It is manifest in his manipulation of materials which are always within reach of a reviewer of the period in question, in his artful methods of introducing new subject matter, and the dramatic surprises of the narrative, not less than in his confident statements and suppressions of facts, his criticisms of public and private character and reputation, his strong contrasts of some of the Reform leaders of the time, and his sensational judgments upon them. All this is done in vigorous English and attractive style. The graces of description, the beauties of prose and poetical quo-

tation, are scattered with a free hand. Even the halo of romance is not wanting. The narrative opens, as did that of the "Last Forty Years," like a New York *Ledger* novelette. Its pages sparkle very often with the same sort of fascinating fiction. However much or little this new Story may catch the popular eye, its literary sagacity and judgment will never win the popular heart.

Assuming the allegations of fact to be indisputable, there will be a general consensus of opinion in regard to a number of topics discussed by the author. The treatment of Robert Gourlay was cruel and inexcusable, even under an alien law that was not more exceptionally severe in Canada than it was in England, and less so than it was in the United States. Few in our day defend the odiousness of a system which developed the political Oligarchy of 1837-38. The evils of State-Churchism, in a young country for which it was utterly unsuited, are pretty generally admitted. The abuses of the then land-granting system in Upper Canada, and the prostitution of the Royal prerogative, and the revenues of the Crown for purely party purposes, cannot be justified. Political tyranny is always hateful. But, notwithstanding all this, the story-teller's impassioned and partisan treatment of the whole subject is fairly open to criticism.

The author probably feels strongly, at all events he writes strongly, indeed vehemently, in regard to these and many other things which he passes in review. I do not at present question his sincerity. He is a professional writer who lives by his pen, and has, I believe, been a contributor to publications in the interest of all political parties. He is here professedly a Liberal, and in espousing that view of the principles and issues involved, Liberals will consider he has taken the right side. It is very doubtful if there will be the same unanimity of opinion in regard to his judgment and discretion as a writer. The complaint has been made—and I have heard it made by intelligent persons holding all sorts of political views—that there is little of the philosophy of history in this narrative: that it lacks that judicial tone and temper that are always befitting a historic pen; that its author appears rather as a hired advocate than an independent thinker

and writer ; and that a rancorous, bitter and vindictive spirit not unfrequently mars its pages. Such a spirit in such a theme is not ingratiating ; it does not woo conviction ; it is more apt to repel than to persuade. In a work claiming to be historical, we expect a thorough sifting and fair presentation of all the material facts, unwarped by prejudice or bias, and with a just regard to the circumstances and the polity of the time. We expect moderation of tone, and, above all, perfect fairness and impartiality. None of these is inconsistent with vigorous diction. There is no reason why all this Story of the past should not be calmly told, even from a Liberal point of view. At all events, there is no need for the writer showing the hand of a specially retained advocate at nearly every turn in his narrative. That sort of advocacy does not as a rule make converts ; the sympathy which it wins is neither strong nor lasting ; it attracts few recruits of promise ; it very often injures the cause which it is designed to serve. Hysterical screeching at effete political abuses never yet turned a vote worth having. If it be true, as I understand its author insists, that such a Story can be told only from a Reform standpoint, there is all the more reason for doing so with equanimity. Just consideration of political antagonists, who have long since gone down to their graves, is never thrown away ; venomous personal detraction is far from seemly.

#### THE OLIGARCHY.

It has been the fashion among extreme partisans to decry the dominant party of Rebellion times as irredeemably bad, and to stigmatize the faintest praise of them as rank heresy. Is not this the creed of a bigot ? It certainly proceeds from a mistaken idea of the facts, and is no proof of undying devotion to the true faith. A narrow spirit of intolerance and injustice is not Liberal ; just we can at least afford to be. The system of Government which then prevailed was unquestionably bad, and practices had grown up, under the forms of law, that were extremely vicious. It was a system, the full conception of which it is hard to grasp, living as we now do in the hey-day of civil and religious liberty. It was really the reign of military Governors, accustomed all their



lives to harsh military discipline, with little or no experience in civil administration, and who were given the great powers and responsibilities of civic rule, arbitrary and unrestrained, over the Canadian people. For this the Robinsons, Hagermans, Strachans, Boultons and others of that time were not responsible. The responsibility lay with the Imperial authorities; it was part and parcel of Imperial policy. The Tory party in Upper Canada accepted the system, and administered it as they found it. They abused the power entrusted to them, but most men, even the best of them, will do this when they get the opportunity. They are more apt to abuse it in affairs of Government in which there is so much at stake, and in which the combined influences of self-interest are so often irresistible. There are some other tyrannies quite as hateful as that of a political Oligarchy. In the system, such as it was, the leading Tories of that day had the fullest faith; they believed it was the best for the country; as such it had come down to them, and they regarded it as a trust to be preserved and kept with all the power at their command. Mackenzie rather unsettled their minds on some of these points; he was one of the first to do so; but the facts nevertheless are undeniable. With all their faults the Tories of that day are entitled to the credit of some good legislation, more, in fact, than is generally supposed. No one but a blind, unreasoning partisan would say otherwise. There were, too, amongst them many men of high personal character, and unsullied private virtues. Mackenzie, who knew them well and had no reason to love them, has left behind him some generous testimony in their behalf. Mr. Dent paints them always in the blackest colours, with scarce a single redeeming trait.

#### THE AUTHOR'S LIKES AND DISLIKES.

If this much may be said for political opponents, what should be said for political friends who, under the cover of sympathy for their principles and their cause, are pursued with the shafts of calumny? In reading this narrative one cannot repress the feeling that the author is very *intense* in his likes and dislikes. This idiosyncrasy—to use no harsher term—permeates

and colours the whole. The facts and evidence are digested, adjusted and embellished accordingly ; the balance, which should be fairly held, is often held very unfairly ; the scale is made to kick the beam when it suits the purpose ; and there is little scruple about using false weights when those of the standard order might fail of the desired effect. In one chapter we find the late Chief Justice Robinson, and the late Bishop Strachan, compared to "half famished tigers of the jungle." In another Gourlay's description of the Bishop, as "a lying little fool of a renegade Presbyterian," is approvingly quoted. Here, there and everywhere the most offensive epithets are applied to William Lyon Mackenzie, while John Rolph is little short of an angel of light. Hysteria is not history.

#### THE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE ONLY TRUE STORY-TELLER.

Of Mr. Dent's assumptions in the task he has undertaken, I wish to say a few words. Of this he cannot complain. In his prospectus of the Story, and in the Story itself, he has arrogated to himself a very high place as a writer and authority on the subject. He affirms that his is the only true narrative. He says further that no accurate account of the movement has ever been written, and that although Mr. Charles Lindsey's *Life and Times of Mackenzie* "is a work of much value," it has a "strong bias." Let me here say that I think the imputation of bias in Mr. Lindsey's biography is undeserved, and I am certain it will not be concurred in by intelligent persons who have read it. It is well known that the author and the subject of his work differed widely in their political views, but their personal and private relations were necessarily most intimate. The biographer has truly said that Mackenzie "never concealed his hand" to him. Mr. Lindsey was, at the time of writing it, the editor of the leading Conservative journal in Upper Canada, and, politically at least, he had and could have no bias whatever in Mackenzie's favour. If anything it was a bias the other way. One of the highest compliments paid the work was that of a prominent Liberal newspaper which praised its impartiality, and said that it was impossible from its perusal to detect the politics of its author.

Sir Francis Hincks, no mean authority, considers it trustworthy. In the "Reminiscences of his Public Life," he says: "I have no reason to doubt the general accuracy of the account given in Lindsey's 'Life and Times of W. L. Mackenzie' of the circumstances which preceded the actual outbreak." And he straightway proceeds to adopt these as strictly reliable. Mr. Dent might have deserved equal credit if, like his historical predecessor, he had simply stated facts and plain inferences from facts, and modestly refrained from putting forth page after page of mere opinions, in a large measure unsupported and unwarranted by the general data. He should be the last man in the world to impute bias of any sort to any previous narrator. His own book is surcharged with that quality from beginning to end. "Strong bias" is one of its distinguishing and crowning characteristics.

#### THE AUTHOR'S SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

Mr. Dent also declares that, since the biography appeared, "much additional light has been thrown upon the subject matter from various sources." What that light is, the reader of this volume will fail to discern. The effulgence shed by the author's pen is not particularly bright or shining, in so far at least as new information is concerned. The real pith and marrow of the Story have been long since given to the public. Without the aid which he has received in this way, his narrative would, I fear, be a sorry production. Nor is he always as grateful as he should be in making use of the labours of others. He speaks with contempt of Mackenzie's *Sketches of Canada and the United States*, but is not above using them as an effective help in the compilation of his own work. In resorting to old materials he has pursued two courses: he has either elaborated the facts with most artistic tediousness, or has coloured and distorted them to suit his own purpose. This is one mode of writing history, but it is not the most meritorious one. A writer in the *Mail* some time ago questioned the originality of the Story on these very grounds, and, I think, with perfect fairness. "A Reformer," whose *nom de plume* was evidently an honest one, mentioned a number of works, well known and easily accessible, to which Mr. Dent had recourse with the greatest freedom

for materials for his narrative. He complained, and with just cause, of the author's manipulation of these as palpably one-sided and unfair. Mr. Dent was charged with concealing or suppressing important information set forth in those works, and with making quotations from them for a partisan purpose. The accusation is, in my opinion, well founded. The writer might have gone further. He might have shewn, as I shall show later on, that the author of the *Story* has been guilty of what he has unscrupulously charged Mackenzie with, viz.: of giving "various and conflicting accounts" of the same transaction in *Rebellion* history, and of imposing these on the public in each case as the true version. For this sort of "additional light," I fancy the long suffering public will feel anything but grateful. Mr. Dent also claims credit for having accumulated a mass of written information on the subject that is "not elsewhere to be found." As yet we have seen very little of this, unless we except a mass of opinions by the author, the most of which are quite unwarranted by the facts.

#### THE MACKENZIE PAPERS.

Although Mr. Dent affects to attach little importance to the Mackenzie papers, their great and permanent value as a historical collection is unquestionable. Most competent judges have so attested. The collection would fill a fair-sized room, and in Mackenzie's lifetime in the old Bond Street homestead, a single room of fair dimensions was allotted to them. They were added to, preserved and guarded by him with sacred care, and their arrangement and tabulation are most complete. He spent an hour or two each day, even during his busiest moments, in this work, and the result shews what a systematic worker he was, and how marvellous was his industry. An examination of these papers will satisfy any intelligent person that there is a great deal of important information, bearing upon the *Rebellion* movement and subsequent political events, which has never yet been disclosed. I have, within the past two or three months, seen documents of a most material nature relating to these which, I am sure, Mr. Dent has never heard or even dreamt of. When his *Story* is finished,

publicity may very properly be given to these, and to much more in the same connection. There is no person, I am assured, who more envies Mr. Lindsey the possession of those papers than Mr. Dent.

#### THE ROLPH "MEMORIAL."

Whatever merit may be claimed for the Rolph papers, and for Rolph's "review of the facts and circumstances bearing upon the rising," Mr. Dent is of course entitled to. Rolph has a right to be heard even in his posthumous defence. How far it will redeem his reputation, which he was unable to redeem in his lifetime, remains to be seen. The "Review" will certainly lose nothing in the hands of his panegyrist. In this critique I have no desire to bear with undue severity upon Rolph; but, it must be remembered, Mr. Dent has made him his hero, has contrasted him with Mackenzie in the most invidious fashion, and has provoked the most unsparing criticism of Rolph's character and career as a public man. The author has in this way signally defeated one of the main purposes—if not the only main purpose—of his book. There would have been no strong desire to re-arraign Rolph, and parade the guilt of his treachery, if he and his principal associate had been treated with anything like even-handed justice and open-handed equity. At all events, under such circumstances, there is ample justification for plain speaking, and, unlike Mr. Dent, I am under no obligation to speak other than plainly.

#### MR. DENT'S PRETENSIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS.

Mr. Dent himself does not mince matters in announcing his call to the sacred office of a Rolphite missionary. He boldly declares that the true Story of the Rebellion has never been told, and that, through the pages of his revelation, the great truth will be proclaimed for the first and only time.

We were the first that ever burst  
 Into that silent sea, \* \* \*



“The time has come,” he says, and “the author of the present work has undertaken to tell the Story.” Judging by the first volume, Mr. Dent’s lofty pretensions are not likely to be sustained. The reflecting reader of its 384 pages will hardly be prepared to admit that the “aching void” in historical literature has been filled, or that either the time has come, or the man. The author’s pretensions would scarcely be admitted even with a better *imprimatur* than he can boast of. Be this as it may, what are his credentials as the sole and only bearer of this message of truth? He is still a young man, and his life and experience as a practising attorney at the quiet little village of Ayr, and afterwards at Toronto, did not, as far as I can learn, imbue him deeply with the lore of Rebellion history. Neither did his long subsequent residence in England. His knowledge of public men as such is plainly very shallow; of intuitive knowledge he has evidently little or none. His acquaintance with politics is in no sense practical; it is book knowledge pure and simple, and seemingly ill digested at that. Some of the theories of legislative and party government, which he has propounded, are of the crudest possible kind. A young men’s political club would tear them into tatters in less time than it takes to formulate them. Mr. Dent is not and never has been a politician. He seems incapable of comprehending the true meaning of the term, or what is implied in it, in the wear and tear of rugged political life. Yet, in this Story, he assumes to be a politician prescient and far seeing to the last degree, and to pronounce upon the minutest phases of politics, and the judgment and sagacity of politicians, fifty years ago, with absolute infallibility. He throws himself into the struggle with all the self-confidence of a veteran diplomat, and, at the same time, with all the *vim* and heat of the keenest combatant in the fray. There are able living politicians in Canada, and more experienced political writers than he, who would hesitate to do this. Mr. Dent does not hesitate a moment. The proverbial folly of rushing in where angels durst not, is no part of his creed. He rushes in headlong, and hits out right and left—often in the blindest and wildest sort of way. He probably thinks this is doing the thing “without fear or favour.” just as he thinks that an entirely different

version of some well ascertained fact is an evidence of originality. This is surely a self-delusion. It leads into all sorts of historical pit-falls, and into some of these Mr. Dent has certainly stumbled.

With the public men of his Story Mr. Dent's acquaintance is clearly of one kind: it is that of a book-worm. This may be estimable enough, but it does not entitle him to speak with the unerring wisdom which he assumes. Although he is the first missionary of the truth, he will hardly claim to be inspired. He has probably, like many other people, read and heard a good deal about those of whom, in these pages, he writes with such self-contained assurance. I question if he ever knew or spoke to any one of them. He has, in short, had no means or opportunities not open to hundreds of other intelligent persons, and certainly none phenomenally favourable, of forming a judgment upon those leaders of rival parties long since departed. Yet he presumes to pass the most sweeping judgments upon them—upon the minutest points in their public and private life, with all the wisdom of a Solomon. Less fallible men than Mr. Dent would have thought twice before doing this. His long sojourn in England, amongst contributors to a press that is notoriously ignorant of Canadian affairs, might have made him more chary of vaulting at one bound into the judgment seat of a court of final appeal in Canadian history. I respectfully submit that His Lordship in so doing is labouring under a dangerous hallucination. Such a court is not yet constituted, and is not likely to be for some time. In seeking to create it in his own person, Mr. Dent is, to say the least, presumptuous.

#### OPINIONS OF THE BOOK.

There are hundreds of persons living, whose judgments, as to the men and events of '37, are of infinitely more value than Mr. Dent's. During the period in question they knew the leading men on both sides personally very well, and, some of them, intimately—knew their true characters, what they really were in themselves, and not merely by reputation, knew them and their manner of living and acting under all sorts of conditions and circumstances. Many

of these, of course, are now old men ; but, like all old men, their recollections of those times are far more vivid and reliable than of the men and things of recent years. I have seen and spoken with a number of such persons, and have letters from some of them, since this book was published. Their estimate of Mr. Dent's work is not flattering to his judgment and discretion as a writer of the history of the period. With some divergencies of opinion on some minor points, I have found them singularly unanimous in this : that the author does not appear to grasp the real state of society, or to discern the true force of the under currents of politics, of the time ; that, in the purely descriptive parts of his Story, there is too much straining after mere theatrical effect that is false and delusive ; and that the analyses of the "personalities" of the Story are highly exaggerated, and very much overdone. I find this opinion strongly prevailing, not only as to Mackenzie and Rolph, but as to some others on the same side, and also as to the leading spirits of the Tory party of that day. I have the best reasons for saying that Mr. Dent has been plainly told this, and much more in the same strain, by not a few who are not unfriendly to him.

Mr. Dent's capabilities as the only true story-teller are evinced in still another way. His conception and discrimination of evidence, for one who has had some professional training as a lawyer, are confused in the extreme. He violates its commonest rules repeatedly. The best available evidence should alone be admissible, yet he admits mere gossip and hearsay, where there is no necessity for it, where better evidence is unquestionably to be had, or where the introduction of anything but the best evidence is contrary to the plainest principles of justice. There is probably room for considerable divergence of opinion on some points ; as to others, there is room for none. As to all classes of evidence, the impression left of Mr. Dent's judicial faculty is not a favourable one. In view of this his bare opinions must be taken just for what they are worth. To say nothing of his honesty and good faith as an author, they will carry weight in proportion to his capabilities for forming

them, and it is not too much to aver that these have been far more limited, and far less trustworthy, than he would have the public believe.

#### DRAMATIC STORY-TELLING.

To all this, however, Mr. Dent can put in an unanswerable plea. He can properly contend that we are expecting too much from this Story in the way of historic fidelity. Stories are never absolutely true to fact; they do not pretend to be; they would be very poor stories if they were. If the romance were omitted, their distinctive feature would be gone. They would be just the play of Hamlet with the Prince nowhere in the cast. Mr. Dent's is intended to be a highly dramatic Story; he means it to be that or nothing. Poor Gourlay, for example, is kept in theatrical tortures before the reader through the whole of one blessed chapter. It is a positive relief when the *coup de theatre* is at an end, and the "Banished Briton," who has been going through a banishing process page after page, as cruelly slow as the rack of the Inquisition and just as excruciating, is really banished at last. The intensely dramatic or sensational, either in prose or verse, is seldom consistent with either accuracy or truth in narrative; playing with imaginative facts is quite permissible. In the author's *dramatis personæ* of the Rebellion, Mackenzie is the sham hero of shady antecedents. His appearance on the stage is generally the signal for manifestations of disapprobation or or contempt. Rolph is the star of the company, the gentlemanly man of the world, who is always keeping the "snarling little upstart" in order, and redeeming, by his delicate sense of honour, the merits of the play. Some allowance, therefore, must be made for the imaginative in Mr. Dent's Story, especially as the story-teller is constructing new characters and new plots out of material worn to the warp and half a century old.

#### THE ROLPH BRIEF.

A master pen has written that, although a historian "must possess an imagination, yet he must control it so absolutely as to content himself with the materials which he finds, and refrain

from supplying deficiencies by additions of his own." "He must also possess sufficient self command to abstain from casting his facts in the mould of his hypothesis." These canons are suggestive in the present case. Mr. Dent has a vivid imagination, but, in so far as Mackenzie and Rolph are concerned, he makes no attempt to control it. He draws upon it for his facts with the greatest self-complacency. He has put before him the unenviable task of degrading Mackenzie in popular estimation, and of exalting Rolph as the great hero of his epic, and the incarnation of all the reform virtues of the time; and in this he gives his imagination full play. He is not satisfied with what any honest searcher after truth can easily find in the way of materials. When deficiencies are wanting to make the hero—and those who knew the man know how many there are—he is ever ready with his imaginative additions, and "piles on the agony" to an excruciating extent. "The mould of his hypothesis" has been contrived with the same set purpose, and he casts his facts in it accordingly. In a word, as I have stated once before, "Mr. Dent has accepted a brief as a professional writer in the Rolph interest, with all that that means, and he intends to do his best to earn his retainer." Of anything like mere mercenary motives, I have already acquitted him, but, of the employment of his pen on the Rolph side there is abundant proof, and will be, I venture to say, stronger proof still. Mr. Dent has a perfect right to do this, only let him do it in a fair, open and manly way. This he is not doing when he is falsifying the record, and withholding evidence that is notorious to the world. He is not doing it when striving for a snap verdict by perversions of fact and misrepresentation of the truth. He may suppress or distort the testimony, but it is becoming clearer every day that he cannot pack the jury.

It is not my present purpose to vindicate William Lyon Mackenzie. That, I imagine, is not required as against the author of this Story. I desire rather to point out to my brother Liberals, and to the Liberal press, the false impression which has been created with respect to a book which, it was believed, would voice their opinions in regard to the two "Fathers of Reform" above



mentioned. I am a Liberal myself, and have been all my life, and I must confess to a feeling of painful disappointment that any public writer claiming the name, should deliberately seek to fasten odium and dishonour upon a man who waged a long and hard life battle for Liberal principles, who suffered so much in their behalf, and who sacrificed his all in the struggle. Had this unsavoury task been performed by some one with the "fiendish and unrelenting spirit" of the Family Compact, we should have been less surprised. But proceeding, as it does, from a professed friend, who can wonder that it has roused indignation and resentment? The flimsy veil of friendship is easily penetrated. If John Rolph is to be made the great hero of the epic, no superior, no equal, must be brooked near his throne. The ground must be carefully prepared beforehand; mine and countermine must be insidiously run; reputations must be sapped by every device of literary art; this one and the other of the old leaders of reform must be belittled or passed over with a mild platitude of praise; above all Mackenzie, who thoroughly unmasked the hero, must have his influence broken and his testimony destroyed. Then shall the way be fairly opened for the *grand coup* in the second volume of the Story when the unmasker shall be covered with ignominy, and the unmasked shall be completely rehabilitated. Such a consummation is no doubt ardently desired, but I am confident it will never be reached. It would be an everlasting disgrace to the Liberal party if it were.

#### PROMISES AND PERFORMANCES.

When this work first appeared a number of Reform newspapers, looking at it in its broad outlines, received it with considerable favour. It met their views as to some things, and, I am free to admit that, to a limited extent, it always will. As to some others, I am satisfied it did not, and that it never will. To Mackenzie, it is not too much to say, a large and generous measure of justice was due, and it was confidently expected that this would be ungrudgingly given. This expectation has been far from met. Assuming, as Reform journalists had a right to assume,

that the book would deal fairly by Mackenzie, some few were ready at the first blush to say so, and to pay the author some polite compliments which he really did not deserve. In most cases, doubtless, opinions were expressed without a careful perusal of the book. A good deal was taken for granted; its misrepresentations were inconceivable by honest men. Although Mr. Dent was not known as a historical expert, he was generally supposed to be a gentleman of Liberal instincts. He had been connected in a sort of way with Liberal journalism, just as he had been connected, in a similar way, with journalism that was not Liberal. Some of his previous essays in literature had prepared the public to believe that his historical treatment of the Upper Canadian Rebellion would be at least fair to all the leaders of Reform in those early years. I venture to say that nine-tenths of those who revere the memories of the men of '37, subscribed for the book, in the implicit trust that this would be done. They have been egregiously deceived. It was also supposed that there would be much new information, fresh contributions to the history of the period, and that, although old facts would be shown in a new light, and old familiar figures in a different framework, the facts would not be distorted, nor the figures discoloured. It was naturally thought that no author of honest purpose, and desiring to give a true and faithful record of the period in question, would strive to bestow honour where it was not due, to disparage, depreciate or defame where it was ill deserved, to extol one historical character—and he of all others the least worthy of it—at the expense of another, and to belittle and sneer at patriotic self-sacrifice as if it were made for the mere sake of vulgar “notoriety” instead of from the highest motives, and the most unselfish aims. In all this, and much more besides, the readers of this book have been grievously disappointed.

#### THE AUTHOR'S “DEAD SET” ON MACKENZIE.

In dealing with individuals especially, Mr. Dent nearly always flies to extremes, and in regard to no two “personalities,” as he calls them, is this more noticeable than William Lyon Mackenzie

and John Rolph. He is compelled to give Mackenzie some credit as a popular leader and public man, but it is given very half-heartedly, and in the most stinted measure. Mr. Dent seems to be always trying "how not to do it." His portraiture of him as a whole is most unfair and untruthful, while, in some respects, it is positively offensive. No person can peruse this volume without feeling that there is throughout a decidedly strong tone of depreciation of Mackenzie at almost every step in his career. He is contrasted with Baldwin, Bidwell, Rolph, and others, with the most ingenious invidiousness, and "damned with faint praise" in nearly every other paragraph. His motives, actions and conduct are continually placed in the most sinister light, and his influence is minimized at almost every turn in the struggle in which he was engaged. His shortcomings are magnified to the last degree—pourtrayed as the ruling passions of his life; his virtues are either concealed altogether, or are darkly shaded by his shortcomings. Is this mean sort of microscopic portraiture fair, or just, or honest? Who of our public men, living or dead, could stand such a test? We are told that it was the persecution to which he was subjected that alone made Mackenzie, and that if the leaders of the reactionary party had treated him with contempt, he would have been a political nobody, would speedily have found his level, and would have sunk into his native obscurity! Yet even reading between the lines, in Mr. Dent's partisan narrative, and supplying mentally the omissions which he has not the common honesty to furnish, the truth is not wholly hidden away. Amidst the devious windings of the Story we discern traces of the well known historical fact that the Oligarchy dreaded Mackenzie more than any man living, and that they appreciated to the fullest extent his widely felt power and influence in exposing the dominant misrule of the time, and rousing popular indignation against it. Even Mackenzie's personal and "social" standing, connections and surroundings are made the subject of a species of criticism which no one with the instincts of a gentleman would

resort to, and which it is difficult to speak of in terms of politeness. One would suppose that the author had some "social" grudge to gratify against a man who was possessed of the most kindly and generous nature, and the warmest sympathies. Mean spirited sneers like these show the "true inwardness" of the writer. As compared with Rolph—who was a traitor to Mackenzie, Baldwin and their friends, if any man ever was—Mackenzie, it will be seen, always suffers. In proportion as Rolph is sought to be exalted, Mackenzie is sought to be lowered, in public estimation. In short, it is very evident to every fair minded reader that no opportunity is lost to place Mackenzie in a false and unfavourable light before the world, to disparage his life work in the cause of good government, and to detract from the generous meed of praise which he should receive from all who are now reaping the benefits which he helped to secure for them and their children.

#### A "BILL OF PARTICULARS."

I have said that Mr. Dent has given Mackenzie some credit. So he has, but it is seemingly dragged out of him as if to preserve a semblance of historical decency. "It must be admitted that he possessed considerable aptitude" for journalism; "that he was sincere in his advocacy of reform, must in all fairness be conceded," is the style in which this is invariably done. Anything and everything else, when boiled down, is reduced to "good intentions" and nothing more. We have all heard of the place that is "paved with good intentions," and Mr. Dent's generosity, in according even this much to Mackenzie, will be duly appreciated. "His itch for notoriety must always be considered in reviewing and estimating his actions," says Mr. Dent. No patriotic endeavour, no long years of toil for better things, that was not tainted with the mere vulgar love of being simply notorious! What a liberal tribute to one whose whole life was a witness against a motive so grovelling! But the author has it in his brief, and why should he not callously blurt it forth?

Then we are told of Mackenzie's "chief motives" and his political views when, in May, 1824, he started *The Colonial*

*Advocate.* It is said that one of his principal motives was that he "might command anything within the power of his party to grant;" but, the writer adds, "the labourer is worthy of his hire." Such an imputation of self seeking and sordidness could only come from one who is either incapable of understanding an unselfish action, or bent on decrying the unselfishness of Mackenzie's whole life. Speaking afterwards when he was in exile of that early time, he himself said: "Other men had opposed and been converted by them (the dominant party). At nine-and-twenty I might have united with them, but chose rather to join the oppressed, nor have I ever regretted that choice, or wavered from the object of my early pursuit." Mackenzie might have had anything he wanted from the Family Compact had he even winked at public abuses. While in England, in August, 1832, as the accredited agent of the petitioners to the Imperial Government against existing grievances in Upper Canada, he was offered a most lucrative office. One of the grievances complained of was the refusal of the Canadian Government to account for the revenue of the Post Office department. Mackenzie had several personal interviews with Lord Goderich, the Colonial Minister, as to this and other subjects of complaint. At one of these the Minister proposed to divide the department and its management into two sections, the Eastern and Western, and to give Mackenzie control of the Western section with all its emoluments. This handsome offer was promptly declined. Mackenzie said, "So far as I am concerned, the arrangement would be a beneficial one, as I could not fail to be personally much benefitted by it; but your Lordship must see that the evil I complain of would be perpetuated, instead of being remedied. I must, therefore, decline the offer." His acceptance of it would have given him an income of \$7,500 a year. How many men could have resisted a bait so tempting? And long years afterwards, when it was "within the power of his party to grant" whatever he desired, he would accept nothing. Several times he was offered offices which would have placed himself and his family in affluence. He firmly rejected all such offers as calculated to shackle his independence. This he valued more than all the



patronage of Governments or parties. He was unpurchaseable even by his own friends, and was a life-long foe to venality in every form. He might have bequeathed to his children the wealth which the world values, but he preferred to leave them "that better part," the legacy of an honest name.

#### MACKENZIE'S PRINCIPLES AND OPINIONS.

As to his opinions when he founded the *Advocate*, Mr. Dent is just as veracious. He says that "many of them were what would now be considered Toryish, and out of date." This is one of many historical inaccuracies that might be pointed out in this Story. Mackenzie, as the *Advocate* shows, favoured the complete independence of members of the Legislature with respect to the government of the day, the independence of the Judges and their appointment for life free from executive control, an Executive possessing the confidence of the people's representatives, religious equality, the abolition of primogeniture, responsible government to the fullest extent, a union of all the British North American provinces, the establishment of a Provincial University free from sectarian control, etc. Are these "Toryish" views? On the contrary they are now accepted by men of all parties; they are universally recognized as part of our present system, and we are certainly indebted not a little to Mackenzie for his early, earnest and persistent advocacy of them. The only question on which he was in the slightest degree "Toryish" was the Clergy Reserves question. As to that he did not for a time hold the voluntary view. He believed in setting apart a portion of the public demesne for the support of religion—of the clergy, not of one church but of every church. He expressed a hope that a law would be enacted "by which the ministers of every body of professing Christians, being British subjects, should receive equal benefits from these Clergy Reserves." When he saw that the statute creating the Reserves was being construed in favour of the Anglican body alone, he changed his opinions on the question, but it was the only prominent question upon which he did change—Mr. Dent to the contrary. As to the University, he strongly supported Bishop Strachan in its establishment, but protested

against its being sectarian, and predicted that it would fail in its objects if it were. "The first newspaper," he says, "I ever issued was a protest against binding down our projected University to the dogmas of any sect: whether of Oxford, Edinburgh, Rome or Moscow." His predictions as to its failure as a sectarian institution were literally verified, and, a quarter of a century afterwards, the University was reformed in accordance with the principles which he laid down in 1824.

#### HIS "CONCEPTIONS OF STATESMANSHIP."

Mr. Dent also says that he had "the most misty conceptions of statesmanship." There were unfortunately few opportunities for reformers in those days to display statesmanly qualities. Mr. Dent has described them as "the maimed and bleeding under dogs in the fight among that crowd of venal and merciless sycophants." There is no need to show that Mackenzie's "conceptions" were statesmanlike. If they were not, the subsequent leaders of parties would not have adopted them as they did. It certainly says something for his prescience and farsightedness as a public man, that he was one of the earliest advocates of British American Union, and it is to his credit that, in the *Advocate* of June 24th, 1824, in an article headed "A Confederation of the British North American Colonies," he outlined the very plan of carrying it out that was afterwards adopted. Mackenzie had also a statesmanlike "conception" of the commercial legislation best suited for Canada. In the parliamentary session of 1836, he carried an Address to His Majesty on the subject of the restraints imposed upon the Province by the commercial legislation of the mother country. At that time all British goods, passing through the United States to this country, were subjected to American duty. The Address prayed that negotiations might be opened up with the Government at Washington to remove this restriction. The East India Company also enjoyed a prohibitive monopoly by which tea could not be imported into Canada *via* the United States. The abolition of this unjust monopoly was also demanded. Canadian wheat was then taxed twenty-five cents per bushel on its admission to the American markets. Our lumber was also

heavily taxed, while these and some other articles, imported from the States here, were not dutiable at all. The Address pointed out a number of such commercial anomalies, and prayed for their removal by the means above indicated. Mackenzie was indeed at that early time the foremost advocate of reciprocity of trade between the two countries, contending that the principle should be extended to all articles which were admitted free of duty from our neighbours' markets into our own. He in fact anticipated, far in advance of his contemporaries, the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854. All this is deserving of special mention by reason of the universal importance that attaches to our trade relations at the present time. Many other illustrations might be given, if any such were necessary, of his broad, statesmanlike "conceptions" of legislation.

#### A FEARLESS REFORM JOURNALIST.

Mr. Dent is equally unjust to Mackenzie as one of the first and most fearless of reform journalists. He says his *Advocate* "was personal journalism with a vengeance." Nothing could be further from the truth than this, and the changes that are rung upon it all through the volume. It would be more candid to say, as Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer says of Cobbett, that Mackenzie "represented journalism, and fought the fight of journalism against authority when it was still a doubt which would gain the day." There were then enormous public abuses in Upper Canada, and he assailed them and their authors on public grounds, and in severe terms, as any honest journalist would do. I have examined a file of the *Advocate* and nothing is plainer than that he was anxious to avoid personalities, and only resorted to them under the most extreme provocation. In one of the first numbers he says: "When I am reduced to personalities, I will bring the *Advocate* to a close." He distinguished between the private and political character of his opponents, was never the aggressor in personal abuse, and when he was made the subject of it himself, complained of it rather in a spirit of injury. The Government newspapers of that time teem with the grossest personal attacks on him to which the reader of the *Advocate* will

find no replies whatever. Nor was he vindictive either in word or action. He very properly sued the genteel roughs who destroyed his types and press, and had them mulcted in exemplary damages, but although strongly urged to do so, he would not prosecute them criminally. When they were prosecuted, at the instigation of other parties, he stated in the witness box that he did not approve of the proceedings, and he hoped the punishment would be nominal. A few years afterwards, when the tyranny of his repeated expulsions from the Legislature roused popular excitement and indignation to the highest pitch, he counselled calmness and moderation. "If public opinion," he said in the *Advocate*, "will not avenge our cause, violence and tumult will not help us." I have heard old politicians, who knew him well, say that his self-control all through that crisis, and at other times of great popular commotion, was something remarkable. He was a generous opponent as well. If he was unsparing of public wrongdoers, he was no less frankly appreciative of their good qualities. As a journalist he frequently spoke of Governor Maitland, Macaulay, Robinson, Boulton and others, his most bitter antagonists, in the kindest terms. In fact on one or two occasions he espoused their cause and opposed Rolph, who, he thought, was unnecessarily severe upon them. His fairness to the Government led to a personal estrangement between himself and Mr. Dent's hero. This thorough independence of Mackenzie, all through his public life, is constantly misrepresented by the author as fickleness, obstinacy, lack of judgment, want of discretion, and every other human weakness.

Following out one of the main purposes of his narrative, the author belittles the influence of the *Advocate* from the outset. He only admits a bare possibility of its contributing, in January, 1825, "to the election of Mr. Willson, the Reform candidate for the Speakership in the Assembly." Mr. Dent did not always think so. In his sketch of "Toronto: Past and Present," in the Memorial Volume, he says: "When Parliament met on the 11th of January, 1825, it was evident that a great change had been wrought in public opinion, and it was pretty generally believed that the philippics of the *Advocate* had had something to

do with bringing about the change. The Compact found itself in a minority." Although very coyly put, there is a strong suggestion here of Mackenzie's power as a journalist. The *Advocate* had been only two months in existence in Toronto when the House met, and only eight months in existence altogether. Mr. Dent's story-telling discrepancies, as we shall see, are of frequent occurrence, especially where Mackenzie is concerned. They are one of many phases of his general unfairness. Wherever he has a choice of two aspects of a public transaction that affects Mackenzie—which is not often—he is very ready to choose the one that is least favourable. He never gives him the benefit of a reasonable doubt, and not unfrequently where there is no doubt at all, and no reason for critical censoriousness, he will be found playing his old game of cynical depreciation. He speaks of Mackenzie's "holding some of his opponents up to public ridicule" in his newspaper, as if it were a breach of every article in the moral law. Ridicule, as a journalistic weapon, never seems to have entered Mr. Dent's head. Mr. Dent is not a humourist. Nor does he appreciate humour in others. He delights in telling us that Rolph had scarce an atom of "frolicsomeness or fun" in him, and that he rarely indulged in "heartly laughter." His book, I need hardly say, is not a funny book in that sense; but it is a very funny book otherwise. The merest glint of humour would have been an oasis in its desert of

\* \* \* \* \* jars,

Suspicions, quarrels, reconcilements, wars;

but there is none. The whole Story is about as genial as a butt of white wine vinegar.

#### SOME WANTON SLANDERS.

In the same strain the writer elsewhere says: "The instability of his (Mackenzie's) opinions was one of his most dangerous characteristics, and this alone marked him out as unfit to be trusted of others." In another place his opinions are spoken of as being with the guidance "as changeable as the hue of the chameleon." This only shows "how unfit to be trusted" is Mr. Dent himself in criticizing. There probably never was a man in public life in



Canada who had more decided and unwavering views on public affairs. It was the soundness and honesty of his opinions, and his steadfastness in maintaining them, that gave him his wide popularity, and made him the power he was in the country. What is more, he knew his power and was self-confident in his assertion of it. Few men had a quicker and deeper insight into the influences that controlled public opinion. Yet, according to this profound critic, "Mackenzie, from his cradle to his grave, was never fit to walk alone and without guidance through any great emergency!" This grim piece of humour is refreshing. If that "extraordinary personality" and "strong man," John Rolph, had only been by his side, how majestic would have been his strides through life's emergencies! Mr. Dent next has a fling at Mackenzie's truthfulness and veracity. He is, by the way, very ready to accept these when it answers his purpose. He defends Bidwell, one of his political pets, from the charge of complicity in the Rebellion, and virtually rests his defence on a statement made by Mackenzie, who simply said that Bidwell was not involved as far as he knew. But elsewhere, in a spiteful little foot note, we are told that "Mackenzie's unsupported testimony, more especially as to matters in any way coming within the scope of politics, is of very little value." A complimentary remark about Rolph is also quoted, and it is said, in so many words, that Mackenzie's word is not to be "credited." In another place he is charged with making statements which he must have known "had no shadow of foundation in truth."

The author's object in this species of defamation is obvious enough. One of the blackest spots in Rolph's record was his traitorous conduct in the flag of truce affair. Mackenzie's testimony against him is overwhelmingly strong. If Mackenzie can only be discredited generally, the process of whitewashing the hero will be comparatively easy. Of all the writers on the period in question, Mr. Dent stands alone in the utterance of such reckless slanders. There is not a man living, whose opinion is worth anything as to the events of that time, who will give them the slightest credence. Statements so audacious and so wide of the truth can scarcely fail to destroy confidence in the trustworthiness of his authorship.

“NON-PARTISAN” CRITICISM.

In the general election of 1828, Mackenzie was returned for the county of York, and Mr. Dent, who gets bolder and less scrupulous as the Story progresses, delivers himself as follows: “He (M.) displayed precisely the same characteristics as a legislator that he had displayed as the conductor of a newspaper—great energy and vigilance, accompanied by a critical and fault-finding spirit, and an almost entire absence of tact and discretion. He gave wanton and unnecessary offence to those who differed from him in opinion, not only on important political questions, but even on comparatively insignificant matters of every day occurrence. His coadjutors found that, independently of the sincerity or insincerity of his intentions, his judgment was not to be trusted. He could be misled by any *ignis fatuus* that displayed a bright light, and was led into many a Serbonian bog from which he was not extricated without serious difficulty. Some men have an unerring instinct which, even in the absence of calm judgment or mature reflection, commonly leads them in the right path. Mackenzie’s first conceptions, on the contrary, were almost invariably erroneous; and he had a perverse habit of frequently clinging to an idea once formed, even when experience and deliberation had proved it to be unsound. \* \* \* In justice to others it becomes highly necessary to form a correct estimate of his personality. This is all the more essential from the fact that he himself at different times gave various and conflicting accounts of the episode with which his name is inseparably blended, which accounts have hitherto been the only sources of information drawn upon by so-called historians. All the references to the Upper Canadian Rebellion to be found in current histories are traceable, directly or indirectly, to Mackenzie himself, and all are built upon false hypotheses and perverted representations of events. To Mackenzie, more than to any other person, or to all other persons combined, are to be attributed all the worst consequences which flowed from that feebly-planned and ill-starred movement,” etc.

## A FEW HISTORIC VAGARIES.

All this is in the author's brief, and he reels it off with the flippancy of a school boy. I had always supposed that a "critical and fault finding spirit" is what leaders of a Parliamentary Opposition usually display. If Mr. Dent had been reading the Parliamentary news during the past few years, instead of digging for slanders amongst the Rolph papers, he would have found this out. Mackenzie's "entire absence of tact and discretion," and his "coadjutors" (*alias* Rolph's) distrust of his "judgment," were simply his indocility to the great man. He did not always agree with Rolph, and sometimes, as we have seen, he opposed him. The hero had a profound sense of his own superior wisdom, and was not very tolerant of those who questioned it. Mackenzie was not alone in the belief that Rolph was not a Solon; Rolph found he had always an independent mind of his own. Why should Mackenzie yield his political conscience to a man, who was not his leader, in any matter in which there was room for an honest difference of opinion? There was surely no want of tact or discretion in holding to his own view. The author blames Mackenzie for his tenacity in clinging to his opinions; elsewhere, as will be remembered, he condemns him for his chameleon-like changeableness. Which is the true story? And, after all, is Mr. Dent not the real chameleon? He ought to know that Mackenzie was, from the moment he first entered public life, an independent Liberal in the true sense of the term. He chafed under the servility of party in minor matters, although no man was ever more staunch and devoted in his attachment to Liberal principles. The author's men of "unerring instinct" who always go right is just another synonyme for Rolph. He is the perfect public man. Mackenzie's "perverse habit of clinging to an idea" that was "unsound" was well exemplified later on in regard to the Municipal Loan Fund scheme. He stood alone in the Legislature in his opposition to that short-sighted and mischievous piece of policy, and "experience proved" that he was right and his "coadjutors" wrong. He imperilled his popularity in so doing, but he had the nerve to do an unpopular thing when he felt the

occasion demanded it. The "justice to others" that the author refers to, is only a periphrasis for justice to, or rather white-washing of, the hero. If that immaculate being is ever to be rehabilitated, it must be at the expense of Mackenzie and at any cost.

#### THE "SO-CALLED HISTORIANS."

The "so-called historians" are next combed down. It seems that all those who have written anything about the Rebellion, during the past fifty years, are all wrong. Although they personally mingled with the living actors in it on both sides, and informed their minds by intercourse with them, and although they searched all the available records of the movement, they don't know anything about it. Their "hypotheses" are all "false," and their "representations perverted," *i. e.*, the hypotheses and representations that Rolph sold his friends, and that his friends knew he did, and said so. Mr. Dent, the new and resplendent star in the historic firmament, is now forthwith to shine. He is to be the historian *par excellence*, the real "Daniel come to judgment," who will straighten out those horrible hypotheses and perversions of events, and make "the crooked places straight, and the rough places smooth"—for Rolph. How lovely! How grateful, too, "the so-called historians" and everybody else should be that the dawn of true history is at hand, that the scales will once for all fall from their eyes, and that their moral and political blindness and obliquity of vision will be for ever removed! It is, to say the least, strange that for nearly half a century Mackenzie's "various and conflicting accounts of the episode" should have so imposed on "the so-called historians" that they all agree in their versions of it. What a lot of simple-minded innocents they were, or what a historic conjuror Mackenzie must have been, to have been able to make the false true, or the true false, according to his own sweet will and pleasure?

#### MACKENZIE'S AND ROLPH'S RESPONSIBILITY.

To Mackenzie more than all others combined "are to be attributed all the worst consequences" of the movement. The Rolph brief again. What these consequences were, that made

them any worse than those usually following an unsuccessful insurrection, the author does not tell us. They were no worse than the results in Lower Canada, and nothing to be compared to those in the Great North-West. Rolph was the adviser-in-chief; Mackenzie acted in conjunction with him and others; he could not act alone; and the event of failure must have been fully considered by all of them alike. Why make Mackenzie the only scape-goat? The brief does not contain the great fact that Rolph was the Executive, the real head of the insurrection—the one man whose orders were strictly carried out even to changing the day for the rising, and who, for that very reason, is more responsible for “the worst consequences” than any one else. The change of day was generally considered a grave error, whatever might have been the ultimate issue. As to that we need not speculate. At all events, was not a man like Rolph, who was most zealous in enticing others into the revolt, equally responsible with Mackenzie? Was he not even more responsible for the consequences when he not only gave no assistance to Mackenzie in operations which he advised, but actually made such operations a foregone, calamitous defeat by the very advice which Mackenzie followed. The “worst consequences” plea is all moonshine. When the movement failed there were many very ready to throw the whole odium of failure on Mackenzie. This is what usually happens in such cases. In Mackenzie’s case, it was unjust; he did not deserve it. He at least had the courage of his convictions; he was in the field at the head of his men, where Rolph should have been if he had had a particle of heroism in his nature. Rolph promised to be there but broke faith with his allies and followers, as he did with Baldwin, the tried friend who trusted him. He had not the pluck to show himself, and while Mackenzie and his friends were impatiently awaiting his coming, he was playing loyalist in the city, and running to and fro with a flag of truce in the devil’s service.

“ALWAYS TITTLE-TATTLE.”

One of Mr. Dent’s favourite weapons of detraction, and, as I have also learned, a fertile source of his historical data, is what Lady M. W. Montagu calls “always tittle-tattle.” In estimating



Mackenzie's "personality" he is very fond of retailing tittle-tattle talks and calling these "testimony," "the conviction of Mackenzie's contemporaries," "of those most favourably disposed," holding "most intimate relations," "bound to him by close ties," etc. He gives no names for an obviously good reason. One of these convenient tattlers is made to say :—"I knew him intimately from his boyhood, and I am compelled to say that, whenever he was in the least excited, he acted like a spoiled child. He underwent no change in this respect, and was the same in youth, manhood and old age. A more unfit person to be entrusted with the management of any great enterprise, or with the control of his fellow creatures, I can hardly conceive." And Mr. Dent calls this idle gossip history! It is as likely as not a concoction, more or less, of the author, but, assuming it to have been said at all, was there ever before a book dignified as historical that traduced a public man in such a fashion? Yet I am told, on good authority, that an important part of the story is made up of information acquired from just such sources. Fancy any work, seriously called by the author a history, founded in any material part on the half a century old gossip of the streets! Were I to apply the same kind of criticism to the fictions of this narrative, the result would be infinitely nearer the truth, and far less complimentary.

#### A "BIT O' HAVERING" ON PARTY STRATEGY.

In the chapter on "Parliamentary Privilege" the author gives us what, to use a Scotch phrase, may be called a "muckle bit o' havering." He bewails the want of "union" between the moderate Conservatives of the time, who "were disgusted with the greedy self-seeking Compact," and "the men of moderate views in the Reform party like the Rolphs," etc. We are told that if such a "union" could have been effected, the Compact would have been driven to the wall. But it seems that the horrible "Mackenzie radicals," "composed for the most part of unlettered farmers and recently arrived immigrants," prevented this happy issue. As to how any "union" of the kind could possibly have ousted the Compact, the reader is not informed. He is left in a "Serbonian

bog." The author says the moderate Conservatives dreaded the "radical element," and that they supported the junto "as the less of two evils." He also tells us that the moderate Reformers "composed fully two-thirds" of the Reform party in the Legislature, and yet he wants us to believe that they, along with the moderate Conservatives, could not have kept the nasty radicals in order. After setting up his beautiful theory in one paragraph, he demolishes it in the next by showing that the "Mackenzie radicals" were not the lions in the path at all. In one breath he says that the Reformers "had exerted a predominating influence during the last two Parliaments," and in the next he declares that, even with that superiority, "they possessed the shadow of power without the reality." With the Executive Council entirely under the control of the Compact, and consequently a complete block to any Reform legislation in the Lower House by any Liberal-Conservative alliance that could have been formed, what real progress could have been made? Mr. Dent doesn't tell us. It is just at this point that we are dropped into his "Serbonian bog." The plain truth is, as every politician and reader of history knows, that in those times party lines were most rigidly drawn, and while there might have been shades of difference of opinion in both parties, as there always are, each party in the House answered, was in fact forced to answer, as one man to the ring of the division bell. The Compact were securely entrenched in their stronghold, the Executive Council. The Lieutenant-Governor was on their side. All the official power and patronage of the country was at their disposal. They were in fact in a position safely to defy any hostile combination against them in the Assembly, and all the "moderate views" under heaven could not have advanced good government a hair's breadth. It was for this reason, as I shall show, that Robert Baldwin declined for a long time to re-enter public life. He despaired of real Reform under such circumstances. There are some other disquisitions in this Story, light and nebulously airy like the foregoing, that a breath of common sense can just as easily blow away. As a political strategist on paper, Mr. Dent is not an unqualified success.

## MACKENZIE'S AGITATION AND THE AUTHOR'S GENEROSITY (?).

Reference is also made—and it is the curtest possible reference—to a most important movement in Upper Canada, originated and successfully carried out mainly through Mackenzie's exertions. This was during the parliamentary recess of 1831, when, as the author puts it, "Mackenzie turned his notoriety to account in getting up a series of petitions to the King and the Imperial Parliament, calling attention to the various grievances wherewith the inhabitants were burdened, and praying for redress." It is in this slipshod, indifferent style that Mackenzie's services are passed over in an agitation which, as has been truly said, "shook Upper Canada throughout its whole extent," and for which he deserves the largest measure of credit. The reader will find none given him. Mr. Dent does not even mention the grievances set forth in the petitions. If he did it would be seen that they respectfully and loyally demanded all the great measures of reform which were afterwards embodied in the legislation of the country. Responsible Government, an Executive possessing the confidence of the people's representatives, the establishment of municipal councils controlling local assessments, the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, law reform, etc., were prayed for as vital to the welfare His Majesty's Canadian Commonwealth. Mr. Dent disposes of all this in a couple of sentences, one of which I have quoted. The same exceedingly generous spirit is displayed throughout the book.

## THE EXPULSIONS FROM THE ASSEMBLY.

Mackenzie afterwards became the bearer of those petitions to England, "turned his notoriety to account" again in that patriotic mission. These appeals to the Home authorities, signed by some 25,000 persons, and backed by the bearer's personal representations, were of immense service. As will hereafter appear, they secured the redress of a number of very serious grievances, and were the commencement of a powerful popular movement which revolutionized the government of the country. The expulsions of Mackenzie from the Assembly are treated of in this connection, and in a man-

ner that might have been expected from Mr. Dent's pen. It is a well-known fact that he was really expelled five times, and his seat declared vacant, and that he was re-elected twice by overwhelming majorities, and twice by acclamation. In one of the contests only one vote was polled for his opponent. It was a splendid triumph for any man. Yet the author dismisses the magnificent receptions given Mackenzie in Toronto with the ill-concealed sneer that "all this popular adulation was grateful to his soul; he was in his element." If the author's hero of "glorious, pious and immortal memory" had been the victorious tribune, what a blast we would have heard from the Dentine trumpet!

#### MR. DENT AS A PATENTEE.

Having described the fearless assertion of the parliamentary rights of his constituents, which even in Mr. Dent's peculiar style is calculated to create a somewhat favourable impression, the author proceeds to nullify, as far as he can, any real credit to Mackenzie in the matter. He says that "the efforts of the faction to ruin and humiliate Mackenzie made a popular hero of one who, if the truth must be told, had very little of the heroic in his composition." No one will be surprised at this oracular judgment. Mr. Dent has made up his mind to have but one hero in his Story. Two heroes would never do; it would defeat its purpose. He is busily engaged in taking out a patent for a monopoly of all the heroism in the narrative for John Rolph. The specifications in part are in his first volume, and more are to follow. In the meanwhile he is jealously guarding against the smallest attempt at an infringement in the market of the quack Rolphite article. Mr. Dent ought to know that the public regard all monopolies with suspicion and distrust. As a solicitor in the courts "in the far-away days that are gone"—to use one of his own phrases—he should have learnt that many patent rights are often patent wrongs, and that they are frequently set aside for fraud and misrepresentation. I fear Mr. Dent's patent will meet with a similar fate. Its novelty is a self-delusion of the patentee; its pretended *bona fides* is simply an imposition on the public.

## HISTORIC INCONSISTENCIES.

Having thus settled the heroic part of Mackenzie's composition, the author proceeds in the same oracular strain:—"Had the Government been wise enough in their own interests to let him (Mackenzie) have his say in the Assembly, he would soon have found his proper level, and would have ceased to carry any weight there. He would undoubtedly have raised a good deal of temporary excitement by unearthing abuses, and by vituperating persons whom he disliked. But he could never have seriously threatened the supremacy of the Compact, for the very sufficient reason that he could not command the sympathies or respect of the leading spirits of his own party. Rolph, the Bidwells and the Baldwins had by this time come to rate Mackenzie at about his true value," etc. This is just one of Mr. Dent's "unsupported" statements which are of "little value," and for which he gives no "sufficient reason," in fact no reason at all. It is also a fair sample of his self-contradictions as a story-teller. As against Mr. Dent I will cite Mr. Dent himself, in another statement which is borne out by the judgment of history. Towards the close of the same chapter he says:—"The plain fact of the matter is, that no sentiment of either loyalty or disloyalty had anything whatever to do with the treatment to which Mackenzie was subjected at the hands of the Compact and their supporters. It was simply this: Mackenzie was a thorn in their sides. He watched them closely, and exposed their conduct in language which was telling and vigorous. \* \* \* They felt that their supremacy was menaced, and largely by his instrumentality." This is "the plain fact of the matter," but the author seems to have forgotten that he had just before expressed a directly contrary opinion. The Story abounds in similar inconsistencies. A writer who employs detraction should have a more convenient memory. The Compact must have known who was their most formidable opponent, and I fancy the reader will prefer to take their deliberate judgment and action, at the time, to that of a prejudiced story-teller who has his eye at this point upon his patent, and is evidently jealous of Mackenzie's rising ascendancy in the Liberal party.



## THE GREAT "UNLETTERED."

Mr. Dent thereafter demonstrates to his own satisfaction that Mackenzie's "true value" was very little. He says:—"His influence was pretty much confined to the farmers and mechanics of that portion of the country where his paper was chiefly circulated; and even there his influence would never have been anything like so great as it actually became had it not been for the persecution to which he was subjected. Over and beyond, he could not be said to have any distinctive *locus standi* in the Reform party. \* \* \*

The structure of his mind prevented him from seeing a question in its various aspects, and, in judging of future political events, he was much more often wrong than right. \* \* \*

He seemed to be utterly incapable of keeping his own counsel, and a secret once told to him was a secret no longer. \* \* \*

It was surely a short-sighted policy which gave to a man so constituted a factitious importance, and which made him for some years the most notorious personage in Upper Canada." This is another deliverance which is to settle the points referred to for all time to come. It will be seen that Mr. Dent's idea of "the farmers and mechanics," as a vital force, is not a very exalted one. In other places he speaks with less disguised contempt of Mackenzie's "satellites among the rural and uneducated portion of the community," "the unlettered yeomen of Wentworth," "the unlettered farmers and recently arrived immigrants," etc. This sublime posing as the elegant and cultured man of letters is a phase in literary æsthetics that "the so-called historians" will please make a note of. The intellectual refinement of lofty minds may at once dismiss the "bone and sinew of the country" as a mere vulgar metaphor of the hustings. It is no less suggestive to our political leaders of all parties who are periodically striving to "influence" the great "unlettered" of the country. They have had fair notice of the estimate to be put upon their "influence" and their political "*locus standi*" by future writers "from a Liberal but non-partisan point of view," if that low sort of popularity-hunting is persisted in. Leaving out Mr. Dent's *canaille*—the farmers, mechanics and immigrants, all of whom felt honoured in

following Mackenzie, and whom he was proud to lead, will our very literary Yellowplush kindly tell us who was left to follow Rolph? In the name of goodness, Mr. Dent, who in those primitive days were the people?

#### A MAN OF THE PEOPLE.

Mackenzie was essentially a man of the people. He could say, as Charles Dickens once said, that he "had unlimited faith in the People with a big P." He was a man of action with a passion for ideas, and he well knew that if his ideas were ever to be carried out, he must have the sympathy and support of the yeomanry and the artisan class who composed the great mass of the population. He was heart and soul with them in their aspirations, and, if they gave him their confidence in no unstinted measure, it was because they felt it would never be betrayed. And it never was. Mr. Dent has surely read history to little purpose, and has gained less from its teachings, when he makes it a reproach to Mackenzie for having successfully extended his influence amongst those who were a tower of strength in a great political struggle. "The persecution to which he was subjected" was due to his fearless championship of the popular cause, and, unlike Mr. Dent, those for whom he fought and suffered gratefully gauged their opinion of him by his untiring devotion to their service, and his cheerful sacrifices in their behalf.

#### ONE OR TWO ROLPHITE SLANDERS.

The threadbare tirade about his want of judgment is revived in this quotation. It is a sweet morsel for the author, and he is constantly rolling it under his tongue. That Mackenzie committed errors of judgment, like every man who has been in public life, is not denied. He was not immaculate in this respect like the hero of the epic Story. "The structure of his mind" had not the manifold, rotund perfections of that "extraordinary personality," but it served his purpose as a lover of his country well enough, and it had none of the Benedict Arnold fibre in its composition. "Weak judgment is not crime, nor is indiscretion always the greatest guilt." Let Mr. Dent remember this when he next undertakes

to enlighten the world with his anatomy and physiology of politicians' hearts. Mackenzie's deliberately expressed convictions with respect to British American Union, the Provincial University, the Municipal Loan Fund Scheme, and Reciprocity of Trade, have already been referred to. These were a few of many great questions that might be mentioned, of the "various aspects" of which he showed the fullest comprehension, and in which the accuracy of his judgment and foresight was strikingly manifest. The charge of disclosing confidences, brought against him for the first time by Mr. Dent, is a calumny that no one who knew Mackenzie, and his fidelity as a political and personal friend, will ever believe, even if it had a better basis to rest upon than the calumniator's worthless statement. To those who did not know him his reputation is a sufficient answer to so unfounded a slander. The charge is varied afterwards in the assertion that, after his return from exile, he "was ready enough to betray the secrets of his sometime coadjutors." This refers of course to his exposure of Rolph in his *Flag of Truce* pamphlet, and explains the origin of the whole calumny. From first to last it is an envenomed product of the Rolph papers, manufactured out of whole cloth, and worthy of its author, who never, as long as he lived, cleared himself from one of the foulest stains that could rest upon the name and character of any public man.

#### ANOTHER SAPIENT POLITICAL THEORY.

Mr. Dent's theory of the "short-sighted policy" of the Compact in giving Mackenzie "a factitious importance," is one of those sapient political theories that are frequently encountered in this book. It shows how "short-sighted" and befogged the writer is in comprehending the political situation of the time. Mackenzie was one of the leaders of the Reform Opposition; he controlled their leading organ; he was a power with his voice as well as his pen, both in Parliament and the country, and his "importance" could not be ignored. A closely besieged garrison might as well have tried to ignore their most determined foe. A leading New York journal once said of him that "his powers of agitation were almost equal to those of the great Daniel O'Connell."

The "importance" of such a man was created by himself, and not factitiously by his adversaries. It was forced upon them in a thousand ways, and, although they might have pursued a different course of action towards him, they would have been arrant fools to have adopted, even if they could, the course indicated by this visionary theorizer.

#### THE AUTHOR'S POLITICAL ACUMEN.

The passage above quoted is not the only one which proves Mr. Dent's unfitness to deal with the period in question. His literary talents I freely admit, and I only regret that, for his own sake, he has not employed them to better advantage in this Story. But tricks in style, and deft turning of periods, are of small importance in the performance of such a task, when political acumen and other substantial qualities are wanting. Many a writer of mere paragraphs of Rebellion history has hit the nail on the head far better, with his limping sentences, than has Mr. Dent with all his flowery rhetoric of over three hundred pages. Of the human nature of the public-life of the time, he shows as little knowledge as he does of the human nature of those who figured in it. He has little or no sympathy with the trials of public men, and is quite incapable of appreciating them. He makes no allowance for the unseen, potent influences which sway their action, and which, as I heard a distinguished politician once say, so often "make of public life the life of a galley slave." He cheats himself into the belief that his hard, surface glance at the political situation, as a professional reviewer, has enabled him to fathom all its problems to their farthest depths. Assuming him to be perfectly sincere, no one who knew the men will say that he has any true conception of Mackenzie's "personality" any more than he has of Rolph's. He has overdone both in opposite directions, and his blunder is almost incomprehensible. Personal qualities, which men carry on their sleeves, any penny-a-liner can hit off. But Mr. Dent is not a penny-a-liner; he is the historian—*facile princeps* in his own estimation—of Rebellion times, the guide, philosopher and candid friend of the "so-called historians" who preceded him. He is the great high priest, the Alpha and Omega, of his craft. If a merely

readable book, "pleasant to the eye," be the object of Mr. Dent's ambition, he has perhaps succeeded ; if it be one that is "good for food," his success is certainly far from assured. A historian whose pen is steeped in flagrant prejudice never can be a success.

"LIBERAL" STORY-TELLING WITH A VENGEANCE.

The author follows up with another of his peculiar criticisms on Mackenzie's career in the Canadian Parliament after his return from exile. He says : "He adopted precisely the same *role* as of yore, and delivered himself with great vehemence on matters which he did not understand. The inevitable result was that the Assembly soon ceased to attach any weight to his opinions. He had lived long enough to repudiate many of his old doctrines, and to eat many of his past words. His views on Tuesday were frequently the very opposite to what they had been on Monday, and neither were any indication of what they would be on Wednesday. Members ceased to attach any importance to his statements, or to think of them as calling for serious consideration. He came to be regarded as a sort of unlicensed jester who might be permitted to amuse the House by his antics when there was no pressing business on hand ; but, as to any real influence, he had no more than the junior messenger. It took him several years to find this out, and when it was brought thoroughly home to him, he resigned his seat." A more insolent fabrication is not to be found in this book, and it is as heartless as it is insolent. The reader may well ask, is the fabricator a Liberal and a friend of Liberals, or is he the bitter, vindictive mouthpiece of Family Compact journalism ? An anonymous libel in a newspaper is a tribute, however small, to journalistic decency ; it shows the author has a remnant of shame. But there is none of this in the paragraph just quoted. Mackenzie had been over twelve years in banishment when the general amnesty was proclaimed in February, 1849. He was the last of the proscribed patriots who were pardoned. He had drunk the bitter draught of exile to its very dregs ; those who were dearest to him alone knew the sufferings he underwent during those twelve long weary years. That he admitted his errors in promoting an armed revolt—errors for which he thus dearly paid—is true. It is the



one mutilated grain of truth in Mr. Dent's elegant phraseology of his eating his past words. He wrote a simple letter to Earl Grey, the Colonial Secretary, expressing his regret for much that he had said and done in inciting insurrection. That his manly action was fully appreciated by the British Government, there is ample testimony. It was no humiliation to Mackenzie, and no one but Mr. Dent would ever make it a reproach to him. His honesty in confessing his error is an example that the defamer of his name and memory may profitably follow.

#### THE RETURNED EXILE.

Mackenzie's terrible trials as an exile would have completely broken a spirit less proud and gallant than his own. The wonder is that he should ever afterwards have regained his old position in public life. He did regain it. He came at once to the front, with all his old fire and energy, to the discomfiture of some who supposed he was forever undone, and of others whose quailing consciousness of their past betrayal of him made of them his meanest foes. His manner of doing so and his public record afterwards, Mr. Dent, with his usual fairness, studiously conceals. In less than a year after his return to Canada with his family he stood for Haldimand, the first open constituency, defeating the late Hon. George Brown, the most formidable opponent he could have encountered, by a considerable majority. That he was for a number of years a power in other constituencies, the record of their electoral contests abundantly proves. He was far from being "downed" by adversity, crushing as that had been. During his absence the principal political reforms, for which he had so long struggled, had been gradually conceded, and it was naturally difficult for him for a time to realize the marvellous change. But he had lost none of his old-time independence; he had learnt something of the hollowness of professed friendship; and, reading between the lines in the above quotation, it is very evident that his well-founded distrust of the political sincerity of Rolph and his parasites has incurred Mr. Dent's displeasure. This appears in the author's poor sneers at the weight and importance of Mackenzie's parliamentary opinions, and their reception

by the Assembly. Petty gibes like these are not very gracious compliments to some of the able men in the House who shared, and publicly endorsed, the sentiments of the returned exile. They are quite as applicable to the minority who so often agreed with Mackenzie, with whom he so often voted, and who comprised some of the first men in the old Parliament of Canada. Experience repeatedly proved that the judgment of that minority, thus scouted at by Mr. Dent in the person of Mackenzie, embodied the real wisdom of the Legislature, and by far the best policy for the country.

Mr. Dent's allusion to Mackenzie as the "unlicensed jester" is worthy of its author. The dramatist has said that

A jest's prosperity lies in the ear  
Of him that hears it, \* \* \*

Mackenzie humour had this prosperity. It is still a pleasant tradition of by-gone parliamentary life. His jests were tender in their mirthfulness; they never left a wound behind. They were not the scornful jests of a Jeremy Diddler "raising the wind" in literature by fictitious stories of the past.

#### MACKENZIE'S LATER PARLIAMENTARY INFLUENCE.

The author's closing reference to Mackenzie's influence in the Assembly as being "no more than the junior messenger's" is of a piece with the rest of this insolent quotation. It is a simple fact of history that, in 1851, this insignificant "junior messenger" moved, and supported in a powerful speech, a motion to abolish the Court of Chancery. The Baldwin-Lafontaine Ministry was then in office. They did their utmost to defeat the proposal, which was hostile to their views as a Government, but, notwithstanding this, Mackenzie carried his motion. Baldwin, the Premier and Attorney-General, surprised and mortified by the vote, at once resigned his seat, and sought re-election in North York, his old constituency. He was defeated by a well-known Reformer, Mr. Joseph Hartman, and thereafter retired from public life. One of the most powerful governments that ever existed in Canada, prior at least to Confederation, was thus

effectually broken up. Of the merits of the question nothing need be said, except that Baldwin's retirement was a source of regret to all his friends. I merely mention the fact, as one proof out of many that might be given, to show that the author's estimate of Mackenzie's parliamentary influence, or of his influence in any way, is never to be trusted. How true it is, as Butler says, that "prejudice may be considered as a continual false medium of viewing things?" What I have just mentioned is, however, something more than this: it is a mean, cold-hearted misrepresentation of historical fact by a writer who loudly vaunts his truthfulness.

#### MACKENZIE'S EXIT FROM THE LEGISLATURE.

Mackenzie resigned his seat in 1858. He disagreed with some of his constituents in regard to a certain railway bill affecting their interests, but, as I also learn from the letter of a gentleman who knew him most intimately, he had a strong conviction that there was not that disposition in the Legislature to trust the masses which he believed should prevail in their representative body. That he should be forced to leave the arena some time, was of course to be expected. His life there had been one of incessant strain and toil. He had secured none of the plunder, had impoverished himself for the rest of his days, and had reaped many a bitter disappointment in the cause that was very dear to him. But he had fought a hard fight, had fought it bravely and well, and he could at last afford, when the day was won, to quit the field with honour. His exit from such a scene surely deserved a parting tribute less harsh and unfeeling than his relentless critic has given him.

This whole paragraph, upon which I have been commenting, is exceedingly suggestive of a series of disgraceful personal articles which appeared in a Toronto journal a little over two years ago. In these some of our most distinguished public men of all parties were assailed in the most infamous terms. It was said at the time that "a gang of libellers" had appeared in the metropolitan press. A well-known writer in the *Week* described them as "waifs of the Canadian or rather of the continental press, who have sold their pens to journals of all parties in turn, and, except

when they were giving vent to their malignity, have probably never written a sincere line." Mr. Dent knows full well who got the credit of being in the "gang."

#### A LITTLE COCK AND BULL STORY.

When Toronto was incorporated as a city, in March, 1834, Mackenzie was elected its first Mayor—the first Mayor in Upper Canada. This was a distinctive honour, and its bare mention in the narrative would have been sufficient as evincing the then state of popular feeling in the chief city, and political capital, of the Province. In Mr. Dent's hands the election is made to serve several sinister purposes. The purpose which it ought to serve is entirely ignored. The author uses it, in the first place, to eulogize Rolph at the expense of Mackenzie, to slander the latter as "a snarling little upstart," "the mere tool and mouthpiece of a low Radical clique," etc., and to detract in every possible way from the credit justly due him as the recipient of this mark of civic confidence. A cock and bull story is told about Rolph's having been first selected by the Reformers of the city as their candidate for the office, and of his subsequently "waiving his claims" in favour of Mackenzie. The latter, it is gratuitously insinuated, intrigued with their mutual friends against the great man to secure his own elevation to the position. This little story, like many parts of the big Story, is exceedingly thin. It differs very materially from Mr. Dent's version of the matter in his sketch of "Toronto: Past and Present," in the Memorial Volume of the city, published in 1884. Assuming for the moment that there is any truth in it, it only shows that Mackenzie had more influence with his party than Rolph. The insinuation is a characteristically mean one, and, I believe, is without a shadow of foundation. Had there been a particle of proof to warrant it, the reader may depend it would have been blazoned forth with all the verity of Holy Writ. If there is one thing more than another in which Mr. Dent's industry is shown, it is in hunting up and parading, with the most hypocritical professions of fairness, everything that could possibly disparage Mackenzie in the eyes of the world. Of this the chapter, in which the Mayoralty election

is referred to, furnishes abundant proof. It is a tissue of slanders. Not an iota of evidence is produced in support of the charge of "double-dealing," which is a pure invention. It is possible that Mackenzie aspired to the Mayoralty, and why shouldn't he? That Rolph certainly did, and that he was keenly disappointed at being pitched overboard, is proved by the fact that, when he found Mackenzie was the candidate fixed upon by the Reformers, he "took the sulks" and resigned his seat in the council, thereby saving himself the mortification of a defeat at the hands of his own political friends. In his "Toronto: Past and Present," Mr. Dent says Rolph "was far from satisfied, and, on the following day, determined to withdraw from the council altogether." For so great a man this was a very small thing to do, and for a hero it was anything but a heroic thing. It was simply childish.

#### THE TRUE INWARDNESS OF THE MAYORALTY BUSINESS.

Mr. Dent's palaver about his "waiving his claims" is a good one. Rolph was not the man to waive his claims to anything if he were in a position to enforce them. In the sketch referred to the same writer says, "he (Rolph) bowed to the will of the (Reform) majority." In other words he was compelled to waive his claims, was in fact dropped from the outset as an unpopular candidate, or, at all events, as a less acceptable and popular candidate than Mackenzie. I am speaking advisedly when I say that the latter was, from the first, the deliberate choice of the Reformers. Undoubted proof of this can be procured at any moment. Rolph's historical touter says the Conservative members of the Council would have supported his candidate, and that they with the Reformers could have elected him easily. No doubt they could, if they had all been united, but the trouble with Mr. Dent's candidate was that the Reformers did not want him, and would not have him. If, as we are told, he was so transcendently the superior "of any other man in the city" in his fitness to "grace the position," it is very strange that the Reformers did not join with the Conservatives in running him in. They wanted a Reform Mayor; they would have had one in Rolph; but why didn't they take him up? I fear there was a



larger Ethiopian in the fence than Mr. Dent permits us to see, and that the "strong man" of the Story was too heavy a man to carry. It was not the first time that his party found him a political dead-weight. His subsequent conduct increased his avoirdupois in that way to an incalculable degree. That he was ever seriously thought of for the Mayor's chair, as against Mackenzie, is incredible. The latter was preferred for many good reasons, and he was unquestionably the free and voluntary choice of the electorate. His election was fully in accord with popular sentiment. Conservative at other times, the city had just before this returned a Reform majority to the council board. The strong sympathy for Mackenzie, on account of his expulsions from Parliament, and his great popularity otherwise, made him the natural choice of the people who would, if necessary, have elected him either as Mayor, or member for the city, by an open popular vote.

#### THE DOCTOR'S "DIGNITY."

Mr. Dent consoles himself over his hero's discomfiture in characteristic style. He says, "Dr. Rolph needed no accession of dignity." This dignity of the Doctor is everlastingly cropping up in this Story. It is occasionally interspersed with the "majesty of his presence," and his Baconian grasp of "all knowledge." If one half that Mr. Dent says about it is true, this heroic quality must have been perfectly overwhelming. It was probably too much so for the lilliputian commonalty amongst whom the great man moved, and from whom he vainly sought the highest civic honours. Can we wonder that they preferred a man who was not so august a "personality," and who could be a simple human being like themselves in the hum-drum of every day life? The great marvel to every one who reads this Story will ever be how all this wealth of human perfection should have been so long undiscovered. The ignorance of the past two or three generations of Canadians must have been truly deplorable.

#### MACKENZIE AS MAYOR.

The author's opinion of Mackenzie's performance of his duties is of little consequence. He does not record the fact that, at a

large public meeting held on the 5th of January, 1835, and which was attended by persons of all political parties, Mackenzie received a unanimous vote of thanks "for the faithful discharge of his arduous duties during his period of office." This would have proved what the Mayor's fellow citizens thought of him, and that, too, at a time when party feeling ran very high. But as Mr. Dent wants posterity to have a very different opinion of Mackenzie, he suppresses the fact, and is as silent about it as the grave. The truth is that while Rolph was reaping profit in attending the cholera patients, Mackenzie was reaping honour as an unsalaried public servant. He dared death intrepidly scores of times in ministering to the stricken patients in their homes, and in placing them with his own hands in the cholera carts, and driving them to the hospital. Mr. Dent gives him credit for pluck and courage, but he conveniently omits mention of this chivalrous service. In his "Toronto: Past and Present," he says it was "heroic," but in this new Story he "eats his past words," and says Mackenzie had "very little of the heroic in his composition."

There is one little incident that he makes the most of because it presents a rare chance for a slap at the city's chief Magistrate. The latter, it seems, put a notoriously abandoned and bad-tongued woman in the public stocks, as a warning to others in the like case offending. This harrows the inmost soul of the author to its very depths; he grows purple with manly indignation, and reels off a resentful screed against the barbarous tyranny of the Court. He takes good care, however, to say nothing against the law which enacted, and which, with the practice, fully sanctioned the sentence. One would have thought that this was at least equally open to his highly virtuous censure. He also conveniently fails to notice the fact that the prime cause of the woman's punishment was her hurling one of her muddy shoes at the occupant of the judgment seat. The incident only illustrates what I have said before, that the best of men will sometimes err in the exercise of legal authority. I sincerely hope, for the credit of the Magistrate, that the woman whom he thus reformed was as ugly as she was bad. If she were a good looking woman, what possible palliation could there be for conduct so ungallant?

## A BIT OF DENTINE LOGIC.

It would puzzle any person to know what the author's rigmarole about Mackenzie's course as a civil official has to do with Rebellion history. More puzzling still is what the publication, in the *Colonial Advocate*, of Mr. Joseph Hume's "baneful domination letter" has to do with the conduct of its editor and publisher as Mayor of Toronto. It is only by a logical process, peculiar to Mr. Dent, that any sort of connection can be traced between the one and the other. Yet the author blends the two, and makes a sustained attack, as unfair as it is illogical, on the "indiscretion" of the publisher. No writer of sense would do this. In assuming official duties as a citizen, Mackenzie did not abnegate his functions as a journalist. Does Mr. Dent want any intelligent person to believe that everything that its editor wrote or published in his newspaper was in his capacity as Mayor of the city?

## THE "BANEFUL DOMINATION" LETTER.

Mr. Hume's letter, looking at the circumstances under which it was written, and the very reasonable explanation of its meaning given by the writer, was a very harmless and innocent production. It raised some well-feigned ire at the time on the part of a few lip-loyalists, but all the fuss made about it, either by them or their latter-day mouthpiece, Mr. Dent, is a veritable tempest in a teapot. Mr. Hume was a well-known British statesman of the Liberal school, and a life-long friend of Mackenzie. He took a warm interest in Canadian affairs, and his letters to the editor frequently appeared in the *Advocate*. In one of these, written just after Mackenzie's repeated expulsions from the Assembly, the writer gave it as his opinion that these events would hasten a crisis in Upper Canada that would "terminate in independence and freedom from the baneful domination of the mother country." In the same letter Mr. Hume replied to an attack made upon him, publicly and privately, by the late Dr. Ryerson, and it is evident he was smarting under a sense of injuries so received when he penned this "baneful" opinion. The writer subsequently explained his meaning to be "that the misrule of the Government

in Canada, and the monopolizing selfish domination of such men as had lately (though but a small faction of the people) resisted all improvements and reform, would lose the countenance of the authorities in Downing street, and leave the people in freedom to manage their own affairs." The result proved that he was not far astray in his calculations. Before this explanation reached Canada, an attempt was made in the city council to censure Mackenzie for publishing the letter. It failed, and the amendment that was adopted in place of the motion of censure, expressed Mr. Hume's meaning substantially as he gave it himself, without any knowledge apparently of the council's action. This shows that the letter was fairly open to an innocent construction, and was so understood by an intelligent body of representative men. Mr. Dent, like a true partisan, makes the barest reference to this significant incident, and rings the changes on the point he wants to make against the publisher. He rakes through the Canadian newspapers, from Dan to Beersheba, for all the violent denunciations he can find of Mackenzie, and quotes these with much gusto as the expression of public opinion. And he calls this the "true story!" The whole thing is a glaring exhibition of partisanship. Its *animus* is self-evident, more especially as the author is forced, later on in his book, to admit that Mackenzie's loyalty at this time was undoubted. Yet nowhere, amidst his array of one-sided, senseless quotations, has he the common honesty to say so.

#### MACKENZIE'S ACKNOWLEDGED LEADERSHIP.

If the publication of the Hume letter was so indiscreet and mischievous as the story-teller seeks to make it out to be, it is very strange that, at the general election right afterwards in October, 1834, the Liberals carried the day. But such is the fact. Mackenzie was again returned for York. Baldwin and Rolph did not offer themselves as candidates in any constituency, and the author says that, although the Reformers had a majority, yet "with the exception of Bidwell and Perry, their best and most trusted chiefs had no seats" in the new Parliament. Although Mackenzie is not classed by Mr. Dent with the "best

and most trusted chiefs" of the Reform party, it goes without saying that he was one of them. He in fact overshadowed the others, and the author makes this plain by the false interpretation which he puts upon Baldwin's motives in declining to stand as a candidate. He declares this was due to "the ascendancy of Mackenzie and his satellites among the rural and uneducated portion of the community"—which is simply a Dentine way of saying that Mackenzie had the country at his back. He also says that Rolph declined re-election for the same reason. While few will believe—even if it were not contrary to the fact—that Baldwin acted from any such small-minded motives, we can all readily believe that Rolph did. A man who had shortly before this sulked his way out of the city council through sheer jealousy of Mackenzie's superior standing with his party, would not be above sulking his way out of Parliament for the same reason. It was very like the great man to do this, and Mr. Dent has rather re-exposed Rolph's infirmities, and the weakness of his own advocacy of that heroic soul, in making so damaging an admission.

#### TWO DIFFERENT LITTLE STORIES.

The extract from Baldwin's letter of the 13th March, 1834, given as proof that its writer was so actuated, is no proof at all. On the contrary, it is more consistent with the writer's friendly feeling towards the editor of the *Advocate*, in whose columns it appeared, and with his conviction that a Reform Assembly could accomplish nothing substantial with an irresponsible Executive in power. And such, I believe, is the fact. Mr. Dent, who gives the false version of Baldwin's motives in this Story, gives the true version in his sketch of Baldwin's life in the "Political Portrait Gallery." He there says that "he (Baldwin) had been irresistably led to the conclusion that his presence in the House at that time would be of little service to the country. He clearly perceived that a Reform House of Assembly could make little headway in the direction of constitutional progress so long as that House was hampered by an irresponsible Executive." Mr. Dent, in telling historical stories, should try and make them agree. He should



have gumption enough to avoid contradicting himself, and not tell one story about a certain thing at one time, and a different story about the same thing when he has an unworthy object to serve. Students of history don't like that sort of historical teaching, and they are very apt to put down the methods of the professor as somewhat of a historical imposition.

#### BALDWIN'S POSITION.

Although nothing is adduced to show that Baldwin and Mackenzie were not, at the time referred to, in perfect accord, it may be stated that such was the case in later years, not only so far as Mackenzie was concerned, but the other Reform leaders as well. Baldwin was then regarded by them, and many of their principal supporters, as being too Conservative and Mr. Dent himself admits this, although not in this book. On the Clergy Reserves question he was not in harmony with the great bulk of his party. On the motion moved by Mackenzie in 1851 for the abolition of the Court of Chancery, there was an Upper Canadian majority against him. This comprised not a few Reformers, and some members of his own profession. This want of accord, it is said, was one of his principal reasons for retiring from public life. Baldwin was undoubtedly a high type of a Canadian public man, but he differed from Mackenzie, in this that he was neither bold nor aggressive. The Hon. Alex. Mackenzie, a high authority, who has spent the greater part of his life in studying men, has stated that Baldwin was "a pure-minded but timid statesman." In some things, I may add, he had the right sort of timidity; in others, he might well have laid his timidity aside.

#### AN AMUSING DUAL ATTITUDE. ROLPH'S MAGNANIMITY.

Keeping all this in mind, Mr. Dent's description of Baldwin's and Rolph's mental attitude towards Mackenzie in 1834 is very amusing. They are both represented as feeling that he was a break on the Reform wheel retarding its onward progress. In other words, that Baldwin, who is always spoken of by the author as exceedingly "moderate" in his political opinions and actions, was then

wanting to move faster in the direction of reform than Mackenzie, who was not moving fast enough! Mr. Dent has only thus to be quoted against himself to show the absurdity of the views which he presents of the political situation. Rolph is evidently coupled with Baldwin, in this opinion of Mackenzie, in order to give an air of respectability to Rolph's patriotic trouble of mind. Not a tittle of proof is offered to show that Baldwin ever held such an opinion; it is simply one of those gratuitous assertions for which the author of this Story will always be famous. I am told that Baldwin's father, Dr. W. W. Baldwin, always voted for Mackenzie. And Mr. Dent plainly intimates, what I believe is the fact, that the father had great influence with the son, who revered his sire's precept and example in all matters political. Robert Baldwin was a gentleman, and his admirers will not thank Mr. Dent for striving to make him anything else. In another place the author imputes aversion to Mackenzie as the reason of Robert B. Sullivan's "retrogressive tendency" in politics. In his "Toronto: Past and Present" he gives a different reason. Sullivan's "social" surroundings and influences are there mentioned as the prime cause. They would no doubt be mentioned again in this Story, were the writer not elaborating a new slander against Mackenzie. That slurs are cast upon other worthies in so doing, is nothing to Mr. Dent. Mackenzie must be hit, no matter who is wounded. Sullivan was a Liberal, but Mr. Dent makes him out to be a political turn-coat mainly on account of "personal rivalry between Mackenzie and himself in municipal matters!" The imputation is no doubt as false and far-fetched in Sullivan's case as in Baldwin's, and is a precious poor compliment to both of them.

The funny part of the whole thing is, that Rolph is represented as taking a "broader view" than Baldwin of Mackenzie's character, and his capabilities as a director of the party's counsels, and we are told, with refreshing coolness, that "he(R.) did not feel disposed to throw him overboard!" I should rather think not, and for the best of reasons. He had tried it once before in the Mayoralty business, and was made a Jonah himself in short order. Rolph's magnanimity, in not desiring to be a Jonah again, is one of the most beautiful tributes to his memory that his panegyrist has paid him.

That he should not wish to be—but why dwell on the virtues of this truly noble man? Are they not all manifest to the world “hitherto lying in darkness” in this touching Story of his life-long constancy to his friends?

#### MACKENZIE PERSONALLY.

The author's unwarranted representations as to Baldwin and Sullivan, noticed in the last paragraph, are quite in keeping with his slanderous methods generally. He never hesitates on the flimsiest basis possible, and often on no basis at all, to hold up his victim to public contumely. The species of odium which he there seeks to attach to him is ingeniously paltry. It is that of a man who inspired in the breasts of others feelings of personal aversion, and who on that account either repelled intercourse or association with him, or provoked hostility on their part. We shall see some fresh illustrations of this further on, in the case of the late Dr. Ryerson. Meanwhile, let me say that this method of attack is *sui generis*. Mr. Dent is the only writer, claiming to be historical, who has so demeaned himself. A more false and unfair impression of Mackenzie personally, than that which he thus seeks to convey, it would be hard to conceive. All who knew Mackenzie at all well will bear me out in the statement that he was a pleasant companion and associate. He was full of vivacity and good humour, and the ready mother wit of a Highlander. He had strong convictions, and these he never concealed, but there was a great deal of thorough geniality in his nature. Despite all the buffetings of fortune, he never wholly lost, even in his declining years, the freshness, buoyancy and brightness of youth. He frolicked with his children, delighted in their society, and was as young in spirit as any of them. He had many bitter public antagonists, because he was a hard hitter. No man in his day took and gave more in that way than he did; but, in the wide circle of his personal acquaintances, on both sides of politics, he had perhaps, all things considered, as few personal enemies as most public men of his time. As is often the case with politicians who are vituperated in the press, those who hated him most were those who knew him least, or who did not know him at all. In the Conservative party,

to say nothing of his own, he had many warm personal friends and admirers. I have it, on the authority of members of his family, that many of his old political opponents visited and ministered to him during his last illness. On these occasions his sick chamber was the scene of not a few touching and tender interviews. He was indeed all his life a most kindly, warm-hearted, and generous man—generous to a fault. Nationality, creed, or party was nothing to Mackenzie whenever his ready, helpful hand, or a good word in season, could be of any avail. Men of that stamp, from whose hearts flows the true “milk of human kindness,” never want friends. He always had “troops of friends,” who appreciated his virtues and his worth. This was shown most touchingly in his days of darkest adversity. He returned from exile broken in fortune. No sooner was it known than private munificence at once came forward with manifold proffers of assistance. Mr. Robert Hay, M.P., the present member for Centre Toronto in the House of Commons, liberally offered to furnish his house from top to bottom. The late Hon. Isaac Buchanan—big hearted Scot that he was—placed his ample purse at his disposal. Other wealthy men did likewise; their bounty was pressed upon him in the most delicate way. Mackenzie would accept nothing; he thought his doing so would hamper his political independence. The moral that riches must reinforce such a virtue, and are necessary in the practice of it, he never believed in; he at least taught the world differently.

He was a frank and sincere man as well, and had a holy hatred of all that was false or mean. There were not in his nature, as Mr. Dent says there were in Rolph's, “depths which were never fathomed by those nearest and dearest to him—possibly not even by himself.” He wore his heart upon his sleeve, and loved those who were as ingenuous as himself, but he was none the less quick to fathom the “ways that are dark” of deep men. When in Parliament he sometimes attended caucuses of his party, but he did not regard them with a favouring eye. He thought that a representative of the people, charged with great individual responsibilities, should exercise these without the trammels which a caucus sometimes imposes. There was “the machine” in politics then as



there is now ; but it was far from being one of his idols. These convictions of political action and public conduct occasionally placed him in a seemingly awkward position, and exposed him to misconception when there was really room for none. His influence, too, upon public men, even of marked individuality, was, I have reason to believe, a good influence. I have heard the late Hon. John Sanfield Macdonald acknowledge this in his own case. Mr. Macdonald once told me that, whatever errors he himself might have committed, he owed very much of the political good that was within him to Mackenzie. The first premier of Ontario was not a man to pay idle compliments, and this was said under circumstances that made its sincerity undoubted. Mackenzie is long since beyond the reach of either praise or censure.

When old age came with muffled drums  
That beat to sleep his tired life's story,

the voice of generous praise was not silent. It was heard even where it was least expected, and has been heard very often since. The voice of "Liberal" censure is Mr. Dent's alone ; his only is the harsh grating of the insectile cynic's pen.

#### THE UPPER AND LOWER CRUST OF REFORM.

Besides being the only true history of the Rebellion, this book assumes to be a very high-toned work as well. The vein of *hauteur*, that runs through some of its personal allusions and criticisms, quite accords with its aristocratic airs and graces generally. The insensate snobbism of these allusions is apparent to any person of refined feeling : a snob is a snob always, masquerade as he will. The author has got the idea that there were two classes of Reformers in those days, viz., the exceedingly genteel and eminently respectable "like the Rolphs, the Bidwells, and the Baldwins," who formed the upper crust of reform, and the *hoi polloi* or "noisy Radicals of the Mackenzie stamp," who composed the lower and vulgar strata of the party. The former come in for all the literary tit-bits of compliment, praise and adulation, the latter for all the cuffs, coppers and small beer. This is not a very happy way of writing the history of a soldier's battle for good govern-



ment, but there is no accounting for tastes when a writer with a great mission appears on the scene. The line must be drawn somewhere, you know. The Pharisees did that in the olden time, and the phylactered race is not yet extinct. In accordance with this beautiful fitness of things, the author, without properly stating the facts, is constantly harping on Mackenzie's "birth and breeding," his "low social grade," etc. Mr. Dent having a patent of nobility, and having been hob-nobbing all his life at Ayr and other places with aristocrats of the purest cerulian tint, can of course afford to do this without a quiver of discomposure. Seriously speaking, does Mr. Dent really think he can? But I shall spare his feelings. I have no desire to wound, although he has not scrupled to do so repeatedly. His pettiness in these sneering allusions to Mackenzie is simply pitiful. He has truly said that "there must surely be some foul taint in the blood of any man who can stoop to such methods." In a country like Canada, whose rulers in every department of human activity are self-made men, they will be received with the contempt which they richly deserve.

#### MACKENZIE'S ANCESTRY.

Mackenzie had no reason to feel ashamed of the race from which he sprung. He had some of the best Highland blood in his veins, and his life proved that he inherited many of the famous clansmen's virtues. He never boasted of his ancestry. Once or twice only, when charged with disloyalty, did he refer to it, and then in language which no one can read without a thrill of admiration. He was a Mackenzie through and through, both his paternal and maternal ancestors being of that name. His paternal grandsire, he tells us, was a Highland farmer, under the Earl of Airlif in Glenshee, Perthshire, and joined the Stuart standard as a volunteer in the famous 1745. His mother's father also served under "bonnie Prince Charlie" as an officer in the Highland army. "My ancestors," he says, "stuck fast to the legitimate race of kings, and though professing a different religion, joined Charles Stuart whom (barring his faith) almost all Scotland considered as its rightful sovereign." . . . "Both my ancestors fought for the royal descendant of their native kings; and after the fatal battle

of Culloden, my maternal grandfather accompanied his unfortunate Prince to the low countries, and was abroad with him on the continent, following his adverse fortunes for years. He returned at length, married, in his native glen, my grandmother, Elizabeth Spalding, a daughter of Mr. Spalding, of Ashintully Castle, and my aged mother was the youngest but two of ten children, the fruit of that marriage." His father was, comparatively speaking, a poor man. But who in a country where, from the lap of poverty, so many have risen to the most exalted positions, will say aught of this? "My mother," he says, "feared God, and He did not forget nor forsake her: never in my early years can I recollect that divine worship was neglected in our little family, when health permitted; never did she in family prayer forget to implore that He, who doeth all things well, would establish in righteousness the throne of our monarch, setting wise and able counsellors around it. Was it from the precept—was it from the example of such a mother and such relations, that I was to imbibe that disloyalty, democracy, falsehood and deception, with which my writings are charged? Surely not." He respected rank when it had the attributes of true nobility, but he admired such attributes far more whoever might be their possessor. Whatever his station in life might be, the man who had manly worth had always a friend in William Lyon Mackenzie.

#### ROLPH'S "EXTRAORDINARINESS."

The author's description of Rolph is one of the most unique things to be found in history or biography anywhere. It is, to use a German phrase, "the only one." "John Rolph," he says, "was unquestionably one of the most extraordinary personalities who have ever figured in the annals of Upper Canada." This is a pretty good lift to start with, and, what is very rare in some of Mr. Dent's descriptions, it has the merit, in a certain sense, of truth. Good old Isaac Taylor, speaking of some persons he knew, says—"Their extraordinary did consist especially in the matters of prayer and devotion." That, I need scarcely say, was not Rolph's "extraordinary." Another old writer, Dr. H. More, quaintly says—"I chuse some few for the extraordinariness of their guilt," etc.

This is a little more apt in its application. To put it mildly, Rolph's "extraordinariness" consisted mainly in his falseness to his friends. Did he not betray Mackenzie, Samuel Lount, David Gibson and all the rest of his confederates who anxiously awaited him at Montgomery's on the ill-fated 4th of December, 1837? Did he not betray the Government as their trusted emissary on that day? And Robert Baldwin, one of his best friends, who accompanied him? Has Mr. Dent not stated that he discovered in the Rolph papers the most damning proofs of Rolph's treachery? Does Mr. Dent not know, was he not told, on undoubted authority, that Baldwin, from that day forward, always considered that Rolph had betrayed him as a personal friend, and that he never afterwards had any friendly intercourse with him? Has Mr. Dent himself not said this in his sketch of Baldwin's life in the Canadian "Political Portrait Gallery"? Was Mr. Dent not also told at the same time, and by the same high authority, that on one occasion when Baldwin and his eldest son visited Dr. Widmer, who was ill, Baldwin treated the attendant physician, Dr. Rolph, with the silent contempt begotten of the latter's prior personal treachery? When Mr. Dent was giving Baldwin's hypothetical opinion of Mackenzie, why did he conveniently forget Baldwin's well-known opinion of Rolph? Why, too, did he fail to recall the continuity of Rolph's falseness? Does he not know that it was consistent and persistent? Has Mr. Dent never heard that this model of all that was high-minded and honourable in old Reform, tried to compass the defeat of Sir Francis Hincks, his political leader in the same Cabinet, when the latter sought re-election in Oxford? That he tried to bring influence to undermine and destroy his own colleague in his old constituency? Does he not know that this fact can be established by living witnesses? Mackenzie has been recklessly and falsely charged by a correspondent in a leading journal with wholesale treachery. But what should be said of a man who was guilty of Rolph's triunity of baseness? Yet this man is the author's hero! Most people will agree with Mr. Dent—John Rolph was a "most extraordinary personality."

## SOME MORE LITERARY "TAFFY."

I need not dwell on the author's mellifluous description of all the "sweetness and light" of this model Reformer. I leave the reader to wonder over his "comprehensive, subtle intellect," his "noble and handsome countenance," his "voice of silvery sweetness," "the dignity and even majesty in his presence that gave the world assurance of a strong man," his "fixity of purpose," his "well-moulded chin," his "firmly-set nose," his "smile that had a winsome sweetness," and all his other perfections physical, moral and intellectual. It is the portrait of one who is only a little lower than the angels. What wonderment, what awe he must have inspired!

And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,  
That one small head should carry all he knew.

## A GREAT MAN'S "PER CONTRA."

"But," says Mr. Dent, "there was unquestionably a *per contra*." "Ah! now," says the confiding reader, "the truth is surely coming." But the truth does not come at all. Mr. Dent struggles agonizingly with his hero's *per contra*, and only evolves "peculiarities" and "idiosyncrasies" that are simply virtues of another order. "No human being possessed John Rolph's entire confidence"; he had "no such thing as self-abandonment"; his "quality of caution" was "preternaturally developed"; he did not "wear his heart upon his sleeve"; "not one among his contemporaries was able to take his moral and intellectual measure"; he "seldom or never abandoned himself to frolicsomeness or fun";—these were a few of the peculiar traits of the great man. And they are always coupled with such words of honeyed sweetness that the writer seems truly sorry when the *per contra* runs out. One startling and momentous truth, however, Mr. Dent has vouchsafed to a gaping world. He solemnly tells us that Rolph "certainly never acted without a motive." This is "certainly" a metaphysical gem of the first water. It ought to have a whole museum to itself. That a personage so extraordinary



never acted without a motive is one of those profound discoveries in mental science that marks a new departure in psychology. How Sir William Hamilton would have exulted in a revelation so wondrous! Mr. Dent should take a long vacation in story-telling, and devote his talents to mind-reading.

#### THE FLAG OF TRUCE EPISODE.

Frequent reference has been made to Rolph's treachery. The facts, as generally stated and accepted, are briefly these: Rolph, who was at the time unknown to the authorities as the executive head of the insurrection against the Government, at the request of that same Government, accompanied Baldwin and one Hugh Carmichael as bearers of a flag of truce to the headquarters of the insurgents at Montgomery's on Yonge-street. The truce-bearers first met Mackenzie, Lount and others with an official verbal message to the effect that the Government wished to know the demands of those in arms, and to prevent bloodshed. Mackenzie, who suspected that the mounted embassy was a mere subterfuge to gain time, demanded a message from the Governor in writing. He also demanded "Independence and a convention to arrange details," and went forward with his force. The truce-bearers returned to the city for the written message asked for, and came back without it. The Governor, it seems, had got over his first real fright, and declined to give anything in writing. In the course of the parley between the opposite parties, Rolph called Lount aside and told him not to heed the message, but to march his men into the city. This, in a word, is the great damning fact against Rolph whose treachery was threefold—to the Government, to Baldwin, and to his own confiding but deceived confederates.

The proof rests so far on the statements of five persons, viz., Mackenzie, Lount, Alves, Brotherton and Baldwin. Those of the first four are positive and direct on the point. Baldwin's is of a circumstantial, but strongly confirmatory, character. On the other side are Rolph's and Carmichael's. Their statements cannot, I submit, be accepted. Both are interested, and the weight of evidence is against them. Carmichael's, besides being exceedingly disingenuous, is interested in this respect, that it was a written



statement prepared, it is generally believed, by Rolph, and signed by Carmichael either just before or after he had had procured for him a Government appointment through Rolph's influence. Apart from this, his account of the affair is contradicted materially by Baldwin. There is no doubt Carmichael gave different versions of what occurred, and I have good reasons for saying, from documents which I have seen, that his statement is simply incredible. The full particulars of this painful episode would be somewhat prolix. They have appeared in print many times already, but the above is a fair digest of the facts. Rolph fled the country, and the evidence against him came out clearly before the Special Commission appointed to enquire into the whole matter, and whose proceedings are reported in the Legislative Assembly Journals for 1837-8. Baldwin testified before the Commission, as did others, including poor Lount, who told his honest, sad tale of false friendship and wrecked hopes almost within the dark shadow of the scaffold upon which he perished. He was executed a few months afterwards, and his fate was universally lamented.

No one who has enquired into the facts has ever, from that day to this, doubted Rolph's guilt. The *Globe* was for many years the organ of all parties in denouncing it. My brief recital corresponds substantially with that given by Mr. Dent in his sketch of Baldwin's life, and subsequently, in his "Toronto: Past and Present." Speaking in the sketch of the direction given by Rolph to Lount, Mr. Dent says: "Assuming this message to have been really delivered by Dr. Rolph, it must be admitted that it places him in an unenviable light, for, in that case, he was guilty, not merely of treason to his country, but of treachery to his friend. *Mr. Baldwin never forgave him, and was never again on speaking terms with him.*" Referring, in the Memorial Volume, to Rolph's denials of his guilt, Mr. Dent again says that "it can hardly be said that his (Rolph's) presentation of the case has ever been satisfactorily established." We shall see whether, like Carmichael, or whether like himself, the author will give still another version of the same matter, when he has Rolph for a prompter and inspirer, and has a different purpose to serve.

## THE AUTHOR AS A QUOTATIONIST.

Some statements in the Narrative of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Francis Bond Head, may also be mentioned in this connection. I cite these for two reasons. One is to show that the opinion entertained of Rolph's conduct, from a high official point of view, was in the main in accord with the opinions of men of all parties, and of the *Globe* as their universal exponent in after years; and the other is to prove the one-sided character of Mr. Dent's historical references and quotations in regard to both Rolph and Mackenzie. One very remarkable feature of the Story is this: that no end of quotations, from different sources, is given derogatory to Mackenzie, and scarcely one of the thousands that might be given in his favour, while, as to Rolph, everything laudatory of him is sedulously hunted up and cited, without a solitary syllable that is disparaging. Could any stronger proof be required of the author's deliberate partisanship? The reader of the Story will see that Mr. Dent has culled from Head's Narrative several of the most offensive passages he could find against Mackenzie, but not a word against Rolph. And so it is in regard to every other reference in the author's book. It is notorious that Rolph's baseness, and his consequent unpopularity amongst the people of Upper Canada, made him the common target for many years of the strongest attacks and denunciations. Of these not even the most distant echo is heard in this bulky, gilt-edged volume. Is it any wonder, then, that the hero appears "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing?" Or that the whole portraiture of Mackenzie is marred, blotched and blemished?

## A NEW RULE OF CRITICISM.

Apply this new canon of story-telling all round, and see the effects of it. There is not a statesman or politician of prominence anywhere whose character and career have not been both praised and censured by their contemporaries in the press or otherwise. Yet, according to the novel rule laid down in this highly judicial narrative, we must accept as final, in every case, a judgment based on the voice of praise or censure alone! Run down the compara-

tively long roll of Canadian public men living and dead—and it is for our young country a roll of honour—and who in the list could stand in history were he thus left at the mercy of the garbler? And who, on the other hand, through this patent winnowing process of Mr. Dent's, might not, like Rolph, come out an embodiment of perfection? Take as a single illustration another "personality" amongst the author's *Patres Conscripti*—Robert Baldwin. I will concede to him as much of immaculateness as will any one, but had he no frailties or shortcomings? And how would it be if, in the pages of historic story-telling, all these were studiously and continuously elaborated and magnified with every artifice of literary ingenuity? What if the portrait of him in John William Kaye's "Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe" were taken as the only true portrait from life? What if every line and feature there were enlarged or distorted? Kaye's limning of Baldwin is far from ingratiating. It is not true, no more true, although more flattering to the original, than is Mr. Dent's unsightly limning of Mackenzie. Or, suppose we take Baldwin, as he appears in the Memoir, by G. Poulett Scrope, M.P., of Charles, Lord Sydenham, and the Narrative of his Administration in Canada? Scrope there charges Baldwin with political ignorance, tergiversation and dishonour, and states why he has been led to such conclusions. I do not sympathize with his views, but I am not called upon to discuss them, nor shall I do so. But what if Baldwin were dealt with, in the light of such a narrative, as mercilessly as is Mackenzie in Mr. Dent's? Mr. Dent does not mention Kaye or Scrope, but who that has cast a stone at Mackenzie has he not mentioned? If the "so-called historians" had winnowed political literature in this way, giving all the wheat to one personage and all the chaff to another, we should not have been surprised, because they, according to Mr. Dent, are a lot of ignoramuses. But Mr. Dent, be it said again with all reverence, is not of these. Not much. He is the only true story-teller, the Gamaliel of Canadian annals, at whose blessed feet the great "So-Called" must sit and learn—the self-appointed Lord Keeper of our historical conscience.

## SIR FRANCIS BOND HEAD TO THE FORE.

The following quotation occurs in Sir Francis Bond Head's despatch to Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary, dated January 26th, 1838. The writer was protesting against Rolph's being made a member of the Executive Council, and, after giving Mackenzie the place of honour in his anathemas, he proceeds :—"Dr. Rolph has been proved to have been the most insidious, the most crafty, the most bloodthirsty, the most treacherous, the most cowardly, and, taking his character altogether, the most infamous of the traitors who lately assailed us. After having been the person who fixed the day on which Toronto was to be attacked, he hypocritically undertook to be the bearer of my appeal to the rebels, to avoid the effusion of human blood ; and it has actually been proved before the Commission, which is investigating this treasonable affair, that, after Dr. Rolph and Mr. Robert Baldwin had delivered this message from me, the former, Dr. Rolph, went aside with two of the principal traitors, and diabolically recommended them to come and attack the town. I will only add that Dr. Rolph's consciousness of the part he had acted prompted him to fly to the United States (before any idea was entertained of arresting him) the moment it became evident that the treacherous attack he had planned would not succeed. As a fugitive traitor, his seat in the House of Assembly has just been declared void, with only two dissentient voices, which merely disagreed on a question of form."

## A CHRONIC DISORDER.

When Mr. Dent was pelting Mackenzie with some of the nastiest missiles he could pick from this self-same Narrative, he forgot the above fragrant little nosegay from the library window of the old Government House at Toronto. His forgetfulness in this line is, I fear, chronic. Mr. Dent is a great book-maker, but one of his infirmities is that his different books on the same subjects do not always tally. Nor do they always tally as to the same transactions in the same book. He is troubled with a mental disorder called in classical times *lubrica memoria*, which, in



our "low radical" vernacular, simply means lubricity of memory. It has affected him a good deal during the past few years. For example, he says one thing in one book about Mackenzie and Baldwin, and, forgetting all about it, says a very different thing in another. He says one thing in one place about Mackenzie in his present book, and, forgetting all about it, says a different thing in another place in this same book. His forgetfulness about Rolph is merely another symptom of the same unfortunate ailment. He forgets everything that would soil the stainless name and character of that monument of political constancy, and even manufactures virtues out of his *per contra*; he remembers every good word that ever has been penned about him. Mr. Dent's fits of mental lubricity are a good deal like the lazy boy's attacks of "school fever": they come on just when he wants them. They are as handy as a pocket in a shirt—to be used or not at the owner's convenience or pleasure; but like the "tricks that are vain," of the Heathen Chinese, they are also very "peculiar."

#### MR. DENT RESPONSIBLE.

But why, some may ask, do you now unearth this old story of Rolph's besetting sin? Why, when even the *Globe* declared, so early as the 31st of December last, that this controversy "concerning the connection of Dr. Rolph with the Rebellion of 1837," was "inevitable?" When the Rolph papers, and Rolph's memoranda of the movement, are manifestly the source of many of the worst calumnies against Mackenzie? When Mr. Dent has given the strongest provocation for unearthing everything by the lofty pedestal of goodness and worth on which he has placed his hero? When he has challenged the strictest scrutiny into every motive and action of his hero's public life? When he has sought, by every means in his power, and notably by the most offensive sort of contrasts with Rolph, and the most unworthy aspersions of the latter's associate, to degrade in the eyes of the world one whose transparent honesty and sincerity alone should have shielded him from such wanton insults? When a scion of the Rolph family has, in the leading journal of the Liberal party of Canada, recklessly and falsely charged the victim of his father's malice with



universal treachery? Surely the limit of endurance was reached, was passed, when calumnies so vindictive were sown broadcast in the fierce light of the public eye? Do I ask for justification or excuse in raking up the ashes of the past under such circumstances? For exposing this white sepulchre of a Story? For stripping its slanders to their rotten framework? For unmasking the author, and condemning his partisan production? For promptly casting back upon his traducers the ignominies heaped upon the dead patriot's grave? I ask for none, for none is required. But if I do ask, upon whom rests the responsibility for all this crimination and recrimination, no one can mistake the certain and only answer. The ripping open of old wounds and sores, as yet unhealed and irritating, is an extremely unpleasant, a very painful operation. But it is Mr. Dent who has forced the fighting; he has been the heartless, rancorous aggressor; his barbed javelins have been hurled everywhere; and upon his shoulders alone must the responsibility—be it heavy or light—remain.

#### A CHARACTERISTIC CONTRAST OF MACKENZIE AND ROLPH.

The author's contrasts of Mackenzie and Rolph are also rather edifying. Here is one of them:—"No two human beings could well be more unlike than were William Lyon Mackenzie and John Rolph. They were compelled to work together in a common cause for many years, but the two entities were thoroughly antagonistic, and there was never much personal liking between them. The structure of their bodies was not more dissimilar than was that of their minds. The one, slight, wiry and ever in motion, seemed as though it might be blown hither and thither by any strong current. The other, solid almost to portliness, was suggestive of fixity—of self-dependence, and unsusceptibility to outside influence. The one was suggestive of being in a great measure the creature of circumstances; the other of being a law unto himself—one who would be more likely to influence circumstances than to be influenced by them. Mackenzie's nature, though it could not strictly be called a shallow one, at any rate lay near the surface, and its characters were not hard to decipher, even upon a brief acquaintance. There were depths in Rolph's nature which were never

fathomed by those nearest and dearest to him—possibly not even by himself. Mackenzie seems to have long regarded Rolph with a sort of distant awe—as a Sphinx, close, oracular, inscrutable,” etc.

#### CHIEFLY CONCERNING “STRUCTURE.”

The first three sentences in the above are more or less true. We have seen already in what respects “the two entities” were “unlike” or “antagonistic.” As to some of these, it will be universally admitted, they were as far apart as the poles. As well could oil and water mix, as could several of the crowning qualities of each blend in either “personal” or, for that matter, political combination. Honest frankness and wily deceit were never twin “entities,” and never will be. Mr. Dent, it will be seen, is great on “structure,” mental, bodily, and, let me add, book structure as well. We have noticed before how he analyzed Mackenzie’s “structure of mind.” He is here investigating, in pretty much the same style, his “structure” of body. All this kind of historic anatomy is exceedingly interesting. It is indispensable in graphic storytelling, as witness Charles Dickens’ subtlety in the same line. But the English master of fiction went deeper into the subject than his Canadian rival. Mr. Dent has strangely enough passed over a most absorbing line of enquiry in regard to both “personalities.” He has entirely omitted the “structure” of their clothes. For a Court historian and literary dandy who only affects the “bloods” of Reform, and looks awry upon the “unlettered” hewers of wood and drawers of water for the party, what a field for his genius was here? Clothes are a powerful element in politics. It is not so many years ago since we had an animated discussion in the Toronto press as to which of the rival parties wore the best clothes. Some journalistic Yellowplush started the momentous question, and finally proved to his own satisfaction, that his political leaders were “the glass of fashion and the mould of form” in this respect. *Ergo* they had the best right to rule the party which ruled the country. Now Rolph, according to Mr. Dent, was a great leader of a political party, the greatest in fact in it, and we are told that he had an “unerring instinct” which always enabled him to lead it aright, but that Mackenzie,

whom some misguided persons think was also a leader of some merit in the same party, was always sure, when the great man allowed him, to lead it wrong. Pursuing the very nice analysis, which he is here engaged in, of the minutest traits and peculiarities of "the two entities," how brilliant Mr. Dent might have been had he only gone into the question of the influence of their respective tailor shops on their respective public careers? How thrilling would have been the theme as a starting point for "all the worst consequences of the movement"? How tame and commonplace beside it would have appeared that noble burst anent the naughty woman in the stocks? Did Rolph sport a broad-cloth cut-a-way with brass buttons, a "dignified" satin stock, unspeakable knee breeches, silk stockings and pumps—all so "suggestive of fixity, of self dependence and unsusceptibility to outside influence," and hence his splendid success? And did Mackenzie take to "low radical" collars, a tweed shooting jacket, wide-awake unmentionables and Cobourgs—all so "suggestive of being the creature of circumstances," not knowing where he would get his next change of linen, and hence his dismal failure? The equally interesting problem of which style the great "unlettered" preferred, might be tackled at the same time. This is a "pointer" for the author's second volume, and he must not miss it. Mr. Dent has shone already like the character in *Hudibras* who was

An haberdasher of small wares  
In politics and State affairs.

But what is all this to an exhaustive disquisition, even in a third volume, on the relative merit and influence of two "personalities," the one "extraordinary" and the other "notorious," from an every-day and Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes point of view? The vexed question, as to the "heroic" in their composition, might at once be settled forever.

#### THE "SPHINX"-LIKE "PERSONALITY."

As I have said elsewhere, there is not much humour in this Story. The author is in too dead earnest in proclaiming his long pent-up message, too seriously sober in telling the momentous,

solemn truth for the first time, and going about his missionary business generally, to attempt the jocose in any shape. But after all there is a good deal of jocoseness in this last extract from his book. The "awe" with which Rolph inspired Mackenzie is about as waggish as anything can be. After gazing in agony on Gourlay's "slow crucifixion," having our blood curdled with a duel that was a "red-handed" murder, and escaping from the jaws of the "half-famished tigers" of the Family Compact, Mr. Dent's little joke operates like a grateful emetic. It is a good one, and we must thank Mr. Dent for innocently cracking it, and letting out the genial juices as we go wading up to the neck through Tory atrocities. Seriously speaking, did our ingenuous jester ever learn from any source, except Rolph's vain imagination, that Mackenzie had a particle of "awe" for human clay of any kind? Or, that he had any more "distant awe" for Rolph than any "canny Scot" might have for an infernal machine that had mysterious springs of mischief in it?

But this is not all. After regaling his readers, like a sly wag as he is, on this sort of jocularly, he treats them to something else pretty much in the same vein. They are carried, at one awful bound, from those "far-away days that are gone" into the realms of Grecian mythology or Egyptian antiquities. It is not very clear which, nor does it matter, because it is not very clear in any sense. We are told that Mackenzie not only regarded Rolph with "a sort of distant awe," but "as a Sphinx, close, *oracular*, inscrutable." In taking out specifications for an "oracular" Sphinx it is very evident that Mr. Dent has got his luminous eye on another patent. This monopolizing spirit of the author's narrative is, to say the least, unfair, and in the name of our common literature and the common public right to open competition, I protest against it. Mr. Dent, however, could hardly have got this idea from the Rolph *memorie*. It was, is, and always will be, his own. Rolph, like all the great heroes of ancient and modern times, had a pardonable share of vanity; but if he was the Bacon in knowledge that Mr. Dent says he was, he would scarcely have written himself down as an "oracular" Sphinx. But we must not be over finical. Mr. Dent in telling a Story is

entitled to considerable license ; he has taken a good deal ; and it will not do to be exacting when he goes plunging about for figures of speech amongst the dust of the ancient classics. To give him full justice, however, he is not entirely "off his base" in all this figurative talk about the only great man in his narrative. The Sphinx of the Greeks was a she-monster, who proposed a mean riddle to the Thebans, and just as meanly killed every one who was unable to guess it. Oedipus, the king of the Thebans, solved the riddle, whereupon the Sphinx slew herself. According to Mr. Dent the hero of his Story was a whole "riddle" in himself. The "facts of his early life," he says, "afford no clue to the reading of the riddle" of his "peculiarities." What is more, he was always propounding riddles to his friends and followers, and chief amongst these was—whether they could count upon him or not when he was most needed ? This was summarily solved at last, and the legend is that the political Sphinx thereupon suffered political strangulation. I don't know whether I have traced out the parallel very lucidly. But that is doubtless what Mr. Dent meant, and the comparison is probably as lucid as his own. At all events, Mr. Dent is in a little difficulty just here. He has got himself into a "Serbonian bog," and I want to help him out of it if I can. My "intentions," like Mackenzie's, are "good," and as the author appreciates Mackenzie's "good intentions," the least he can do is to extend his appreciation to those of his critic.

But surely the author must have been wool-gathering when he hit upon Rolph as a Sphinx. The comparison is not a bit complimentary ; it is really "the unkindest cut of all." The Sphinx suicide that Oedipus got rid of was by no means a lovely "personality." She was a "tyrant-monster who had very little regard for the feelings of the unlettered farmers and mechanics," and "the rural section of the community" around old Thebes. But did Mr. Dent never hear of another Sphinx—"The Sphinx of the Tuileries," celebrated in John Hays' verse ?

They call him a Sphinx,—it pleases him,—  
 And if we narrowly read,  
 We will find some truth in the flunkey's praise,—  
 The man is a Sphinx indeed.



For the Sphinx with breast of woman,  
 And face so debonair,  
 Had the sleek, false paws of a lion,  
 That could furtively seize and tear.

So far to the shoulders,—but if you took  
 The beast in reverse, you would find  
 The ignoble form of a craven cur  
 Was all that lay behind.

Mr. Dent will at once see how cynical is his comparison. He has evidently got it in the wrong place. Why didn't he dovetail it and gild it over amongst the hero's *per contra*?

There is little to be added about the "extraordinary personality." Rolph's abilities are unquestionable, but with his use or abuse of them, outside the line of criticism here pursued, I have nothing at present to do. Even were this not "the other side of the 'Story,'" I feel that Mr. Dent's patent is too sacred a thing for unhallowed hands to touch. The least said, and the least that is provoked to be said, about his epic hero the better. Since the appearance of the author's "extraordinary" estimate of his character, I have heard from those who had the best means of knowing him, much that has astonished me, and that would astonish any person. But I have no desire to travel beyond the record, or to deal with Rolph other than the actual necessities of the case require. Mr. Dent has called forth all that has appeared about his hero in the newspaper press, or in these pages. Those who are most interested in shielding Rolph's reputation, and defending him before the world, may thank the story-teller's indiscretions for it all. The extract from the *Globe* contained in "A Reformer's" letter is far less surprising to me now than when I first read it; I know some persons to whom it caused no surprise whatever. There is little doubt that the late Hon. George Brown knew more about the man whom he thus etched in a leading article than Mr. Dent has ever "dreamt of in his philosophy;" and, after all said and done, the fact remains that the *Globe* has dealt leniently with Rolph. In speaking of Mackenzie's personal relations with Sir Francis Bond Head, Mr. Dent gleefully announces that the former was "inexpressibly odious" to "this diner-out of the first water." But why did he

fail to announce that, during the last years of his administration, the Lieutenant-Governor never invited Rolph to his table? An old resident of Toronto is authority for the statement once made by Rolph, that he (Rolph) cared less about effecting a political change by violent means than he did about ruining Sir Francis Bond Head as a public man forever. Why was all this? John Rolph was in truth far better known and understood than the author of this Story has for a moment supposed, and I can well believe that, had Mr. Dent exercised that prudent spirit of enquiry which every writer of history should exercise, and which is very properly required, he would never have blundered into such extravagances of adulation.

#### THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1836.

I now come to the author's lucubrations on the general election of 1836. This was brought on by a stretch of the Royal prerogative in dissolving Parliament with the deliberate intention, as afterwards appeared, of securing a Tory victory at any price. The election was, from all accounts we have of it, carried against the Reformers by improper and unfair means. Mr. Dent being corroborated by other more trustworthy writers, we can readily believe him when he says that "the official party entered upon the contest with loaded dice and a determination to win." The "loaded dice" were a profuse expenditure of money, partisan returning officers, the personal intervention and assistance of the Lieutenant-Governor, intimidation at the polls, and a free and lavish distribution of Crown lands patents amongst the most needy of the electors. This last, as most writers on the period agree, was by all odds the most potent influence. The loyalty trumpet was also sounded through the land. The author declares that "the issue was an exciting, but not a doubtful one." He is quite correct. The Reformers were utterly worsted at the polls by their opponents determined and successful interference everywhere with the freedom of election. They had gone in to win at all hazards, and they did win. Speaking of the use made of the nearly fifteen hundred patents issued by the Government, Mr. Dent says: "Freedom of election was paralyzed. Reform voters

were literally overwhelmed, and their franchise rendered of no avail." And, speaking of other adverse influences, he also says: "They (the Reformers) needed all the courage of their opinions to support them against the obloquy which official slander had aroused. The courageous among them faced the polls in the spirit of a forlorn hope. The more timid quietly remained at home and refrained from voting, rather than subject themselves to certain insult and probable physical violence." The victory, at all events, was dearly bought. It brought on a political reaction which plunged the country into a species of civil war, and thereby hastened, by many years, the victors final overthrow.

#### A SLIGHT INCONSISTENCY.

We must, as I have said, accept the author's statements on these points, because they are more or less corroborated by other and better authorities. The triumph of the Tories by such means being thus a foregone conclusion, and Mr. Dent having, as we have seen, fully committed himself to that view of the matter, what is to be thought of his consistency a few pages farther on where he ascribes the defeat of the Reformers to other and different causes? He there (at page 333) says that "the ignominious discomfiture of the Reformers had been brought about by defections from their own ranks." His somersault is at once explained. It arises from the natural bent of his mind as a storyteller. He fancies he sees an opening to "get in" another staggering blow at Mackenzie, and, without stopping to consider that it may prove a boomerang, he straightway delivers it. In explanation of the Reform defeat he declares in the very next sentence to that just quoted, that "moderate-minded Reformers had come to think, with the Conservatives, that even Family Compact domination was preferable to the ascendancy of such men as Mackenzie." In other words, coolly disregarding all that he had stated just before about "freedom of election" being "paralyzed," etc., he audaciously turns around and says that Mackenzie was the *bete noir* who had caused the whole catastrophe! Poor Mackenzie! When will his sins of omission and commission ever be condoned?

DENT *vs.* DENT.

Mackenzie was certainly not responsible in this instance any more than the rest of his party. And it is perfectly clear from this very portion of the narrative itself—if any more proof be required—that the author is extremely unfair in his attempt to make him responsible. That Mr. Dent has here misrepresented the real state of feeling amongst Reformers at that particular time, is evident from certain circumstances stated by himself, which are also corroborated. The principal of these is that, in the period intervening between the prorogation of the House of Assembly and the dissolution immediately preceding the general election, there was a great deal of public excitement which tended to thoroughly unite and consolidate the Reform party. In proof of this I quote Mr. Dent at pages 320 and 326 of his Story, where he has no object to prove, and is plainly telling the unvarnished truth, against Mr. Dent at page 333 before mentioned, where he wishes to deal a foul blow at Mackenzie, and, for that purpose, does not scruple to distort the truth. At page 320 he says: “During the weeks following the prorogation the public excitement continued to increase until it had reached a height without precedent in the history of the Province. The Reformers felt that they had been woefully deceived in the Lieutenant-Governor, and many of them placed no bounds to their censure. Some of the Reform newspapers hinted pretty strongly that no people could be expected to remain permanently loyal when they were deprived of their rights year after year, and when all their petitions were set at naught. The political atmosphere was charged with electricity. The outlook was lurid and ominous. Some of the loyalists began to dread an actual uprising of the people.” And at page 326 he says: “The Reformers, *moderate and radical*, were brought closer together by the agitated state of the public mind, and by the efforts of the official party to destroy their influence. Several weeks before the dissolution actually took place, it became known that such a step was imminent, and quiet preparations were made for the general election which was to follow.” What is the only reasonable and legitimate inference to be drawn from these state-

ments? Is it not that, amongst Reformers generally, the fears of "the ascendancy of such men as Mackenzie" were not, as Mr. Dent would have us believe at page 333, the predominating cause of the Reform disaster? Are not these statements wholly inconsistent with his previous absurd assertion that "moderate-minded Reformers" preferred "Family Compact domination" to this so-called "ascendancy"? How could there be any pernicious Mackenzie "ascendancy" about it, because that is what he means, when, on his own showing, "moderate and radical" were united? As often happens in the practical working of political parties, a great common danger had brought the Reformers into thorough harmony, if indeed that was required. But it really was not. They had been thoroughly united during the last Parliament, and the principal effect of the crisis that had arisen was to make them show a more determined front than ever. At all events, there was no change in Reform sentiment, as Mr. Dent has here stated it, prior to the election. Mackenzie and his party were in perfect accord. Why then should the misfortune of defeat be laid at his door? Mr. Dent, be it observed, has also told us that "the more timid" Reformers "quietly remained at home and refrained from voting." The probabilities are that there were very many who acted in this way. The intimidation that was being exercised was noised about everywhere. The polling lasted for a week, and, in sparsely settled sections of the country especially, timid Reform voters were not likely to travel for miles over bad roads to the polling places on what, they might well believe, would be a "fool's errand." From this it plainly appears that the whole of the Reform vote proper was not polled. Mackenzie was certainly not to blame for that, unless Mr. Dent wants us to infer that the Reform leader ought to have been omnipresent as well as omnipotent. Such an inference would be no more unreasonable than many others in the same connection.

#### A NEST OF SELF-CONTRADICTIONS.

Further proof of this specious, but none the less studied, injustice to Mackenzie is furnished by the author at page 321. He there says that "it was no secret that the Upper Canadian



Reformers generally were in sympathy with the projects of Reform entertained by the Lower Canadian agitators; and it suited the Tories to assume that the sympathy extended not only to legitimate projects of Reform, but to less openly-avowed schemes of rebellion." So that their identification with their friends in the Lower Province had also something to do with the disaster which befell the Reformers in the Upper Province. It suits Mr. Dent, however, "to assume" that Mackenzie was the rock that had made shipwreck of their fortunes.

Still discussing the same subject in the same stumbling way, the author, at another place in the same chapter, says: "The conduct of the party in power had been such as to make temporary radicals of not a few persons who had heretofore been known as moderate Reformers. It may be said, indeed, that nearly all the moderates had either made common cause with the Government party for fear of the radicals, or had coalesced with the radicals from a sense of official tyranny and injustice. Public meetings were held, at which the Lieutenant-Governor and his myrmidons were subject to the most vehement denunciations. At a meeting of the Constitutional Reform Society, Dr. Baldwin, George Ridout, James E. Small and others referred to His Excellency's conduct in terms which public audiences had never before heard from their lips." He also says, speaking of the same thing in another place, that "these feelings were participated in by Reformers generally." Here we have a still different account of the influences at work amongst the people, and which at the same time throws a flood of light on the author's pet theory of the baneful Mackenzie "ascendancy." Robert Baldwin's father, and other leading men of the Reform party, as well as "Reformers generally" are shown to be quite as violently disposed against the Government as Mackenzie. According to one opinion of the author, expressed in the above quotation, the "moderate Reformers" were not perverts at all, but as radical as Mackenzie or any of his party, This is most probably the correct statement of the case, although, as we have seen, it is directly opposed to previous statements on the very same point. Then again, according to another opinion in the very next sentence, "the moderates" were *divided* between the

two parties, Reform and Tory. What then becomes of that little pet theory, so flippantly advanced just before, that all the "moderate-minded Reformers" were against Mackenzie whose terrible "ascendancy" had frightened them like a flock of sheep into the Tory ranks? The only answer is that it is simply another contradiction and inconsistency. There is in short a whole series of contradictions and inconsistencies about the same public transaction, and they are almost incomprehensible except on the well understood rule—which Mr. Dent hereafter would do well to follow—that a straightforward story can only be told straightforwardly, and that a crooked story will almost certainly trip the story-teller unless he be a very clever man who tells it. That species of cleverness Mr. Dent has not yet acquired. If he wanted his readers to place any credence whatever in his narrative, he should really have told it with some sort of consistency. There are, I dare say, some statements in it that they would like to believe. But when they find their author turning somersaults, displaying his agility as a literary acrobat, and swinging all round the circle in his explanation of a very simple occurrence, apparently for no other reason than to get a fling at one of the principal characters in his Story, they may well be excused for being strongly sceptical of the truth itself whenever they chance to come across it.

#### MACKENZIE'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEFEAT.

Amidst this beautiful medley of accounts of the state of feeling amongst Reformers, during this memorable election contest, it clearly appears that Mackenzie was not responsible, any more than the rest of his party, for the ruinous result. The Reformers as a party went into the struggle shoulder to shoulder, united in policy and sentiment, and the responsibility of defeat must be justly shared by all alike. Their fate was sealed from the outset, by reason of the agencies employed against them, and Mr. Dent concurs in this view. Why then censure any one man, or any one section of the party? Mackenzie's publication of the Hume letter, which Mr. Dent also refers to, could not materially have affected the result. Its force, if it ever had any,

was long since spent. It appeared in the *Advocate* fully two years before this time, and, at the general election a few months afterwards in the same year, when it was still fresh in the public mind, and when it was made to render all the Tory service possible, the Reformers scored a victory. No doubt there were, as Mr. Dent says, defections from the Reform ranks. His principal authority for the statement is Sir Francis Hincks' "Reminiscences." There are other authorities as well, and being so corroborated, we must accept Mr. Dent again. The Methodists, influenced more or less by Dr. Ryerson, who usually contrived to be on the side of the ruling powers, but really influenced far more, as we shall see, by a large money grant in aid of the Cobourg Academy, went over in considerable numbers to the enemy. But their defection alone could not possibly have brought about the utter rout sustained by the Liberals. It was really due to a combination of influences which Mr. Dent rightly indicated when he followed in the beaten track of better authorities than himself, but which he wrongly indicated when he left the path of honest narration to hit Mackenzie below the belt. One of these influences, I venture to say, was one which is constantly upsetting the calculations of the most sagacious party politicians. I refer to that of the middle or no-party electorate—the political "residuum," as it may here be called—which had no strongly pronounced party leanings, which usually hovered between the contending forces, attaching itself at one time to one side, and at another time to the other. It goes without saying, that, on some previous occasions, this middle party had joined the Reformers. If it had not done so, it is difficult to conceive how the latter could have succeeded in securing the control of the Assembly, unsatisfactory as any such control was with an irresponsible Executive in power. But on this notable occasion, in the early summer of 1836, there can hardly be any question that this middle party gravitated towards the reactionist ranks, and fell into line under the Tory banner. Their numbers may not have been large; they were probably small; but it has been too often demonstrated within recent years how small is the actual number of votes essential

to the rise and fall of parties, and to make and unmake Governments, to leave any doubt as to the inevitable consequences, in a severe contest, of such an influence being transferred from one side to the other.

#### MR. DENT'S "MODERATE" POLITICIANS.

This important factor in the struggles of ante-Rebellion parties does not seem to have come within the range of Mr. Dent's political ken. There is no mention of it anywhere in this volume. It would appear to be embraced in his idea of the "moderate" Reform element. Such an idea is, to say the least, a very confused one. It was certainly quite as much, if not more, a Tory element, but it was in fact anything or nothing—a most fickle and uncertain, but none the less potent, influence in all general election contests. Moderation in politics is not to be despised. Many of the most intelligent politicians of our own time are moderate, but, all the same, their political principles are distinctive, and their opinions very pronounced. There is no reason why this should not be. They are in this respect very different from many of the "moderates" whom Mr. Dent is so fond of patting on the back. Those nonde script gentry were "neither fish, flesh, fowl nor good herring." They were evidently persons of very easy political virtue, and the author's unbounded admiration of their loose principles, and still looser practices, is not at all surprising. Mr. Dent may, however, be only in a secondary degree responsible for these free and easy notions of political morality. His ideas, on some of the points which I have noticed, are very probably derived from the Rolph *memoriæ*. These Rolph papers are the bane of his book. He will some day heartily wish that he had never seen them, and that, long years before he had taken the highest seat in the story-telling synagogue, they had been buried in the depths of oblivion. They have led him far astray from the straight way and the narrow path of literary rectitude, and have sent him nakedly wandering down the aisles of history in deep, delusive dreams of Mackenzie viciousness and Rolph virtue, to be awakened, I trust, some time, and again clothed and in his right mind.

“THE ONE STREAK OF BRIGHT LIGHT.”

Most of the prominent Reformers, Mackenzie included, were defeated in this election. Mr. Dent, fancying that he has his victim nicely saddled with the discredit of the defeat, concludes his phenomenal description of it with a rhetorical sky-rocket for his hero. No sooner does down go Mackenzie than up goes the Doctor, in this Story. We are accordingly told that “the one significant gain to the Reform party arose out of the election of Dr. Rolph. His return was the one streak of bright light which appeared in the Reform horizon at the close of the campaign.” It would be rather interesting, I fancy, to enquire how it happened that, in Norfolk, where the Methodist vote and the Ryerson influence were pretty strong, the cunning “Oily Gammon” of the *Globe* managed to squeeze in. From what I have been able to discover, in old records of the campaign, of the influences employed by the Reform candidate there, Rolph in his private canvass was no more loyal to the leaders of his party than he was on numerous occasions afterwards. He was a professional man in more senses than one; at times he made great political professions that were in inverse proportion to his performances; and he was not above “running with the hare and hunting with the hounds” when he was not under proper surveillance. Be this as it may, no one will envy Mr. Dent his fresh extraction of sunbeams from cucumbers in the case of his hero. Mr. Dent sends Rolph up like a rocket, but he omits to add that he speedily came down like the stick. For all the good that that worthy could accomplish, even if he had had the chance, in the House of Assembly afterwards, he might as well have been tied hand and foot, with his back broke, in the depths of the Norfolk forest.

RYERSON AND MACKENZIE.

The meanly false impression which the author strives to create of Mackenzie personally has already been noticed. In these meanderings through the suburbs of old-time election history, Mr. Dent again favours us with his “non-partisan” views on the same point. It occurs in his remarks on the differences between



Mackenzie and the late Rev. Dr. Ryerson. He says that the former "quarrelled with Dr. Ryerson," who, "in common with a large and respectable portion of the Upper Canadian population, cherished a feeling of personal contempt for Mackenzie, whose character he thoroughly despised, and whose projects he regarded as prejudicial to the welfare of the colony." He then proceeds to speak of Dr. Ryerson's taking part in the election of 1836 against the Reformers and adds—"his (Ryerson's) dislike of Mackenzie probably imparted zeal to his opposition." Let me ask, has it never occurred to Mr. Dent, when writing in this uncalled-for and gratuitously offensive strain, that he is stepping on rather slippery ground? That he is jeopardizing his own "character" amongst "a large and respectable portion" of our people? Can Mr. Dent afford to do this? I hardly think he can. I am not aware that he can afford to "thoroughly despise," even at second hand, the character of any Canadian public man, or to take the risk of imputing to any person that sort of contempt for Mackenzie. He knows best whereof he writes, but those who think most highly of Dr. Ryerson, or who have any regard for him, will scarcely thank Mr. Dent for his wanton indiscretion in dragging their old friend into the miry ruts of his narrative, and leaving him there to be scoffed at. Stories like this, replete with "hypocrisies, and envies and all evil speakings," are very apt to provoke reprisals. They certainly give rise to criticisms and animadversions of one kind or another that a fair and dispassionate presentation of the facts would never have called forth. I have every respect for Dr. Ryerson, and for his services in the cause of education, but justice to Mackenzie, which Mr. Dent denies him in this instance, compels me to advert to the relations subsisting between the two men. This is all the more necessary from the fact, known to Mr. Dent and which probably gave zest to his insolent imputations, that Mackenzie has always had many warm friends and admirers in the influential religious body to which Dr. Ryerson belonged.

#### THE AUTHOR IN A NEW ROLE.

Mr. Dent, as we have seen, is gifted with many rare accomplishments as a story-teller. He has enlarged the bounds of his-  
toric fiction to an indefinite extent, and has reduced story-telling,

both as a science and an art, to a very fine thing. But he is no less distinguished as a literary juggler and contortionist. In this very difficult *role* he is almost unequalled. No one who has faced the garish footlights for many years in this country can at all compare with him. He is the literary "Wizard of the North." He can swallow himself with the greatest of ease in two different treatises on the same subject; he can go through a similar performance in one and the same treatise; nay, in one and the same chapter. He can do it, too, without so much as a wry face, and, having got through the deglutition process, can come up smiling and salute his wondering audience in the most approved fashion. The old literary trick of opening one's mouth and putting his foot in it, is nothing new to Signor Del Dento. Indeed, he has rather improved on it. He can open his historic mouth, and put both his historic feet in it, without the slightest difficulty. He does it so adroitly and gracefully that he seems rather to like it. In fact, it has become a sort of passion with him, and like all persons who have an overmastering passion for that sort of display, the merest suggestion of his capabilities, as a leading performer in his favourite *role*, sets him off at once in a fresh exhibition of his skill. Signor's contortions, in what may be called his Ryersonian tricks of the stage, are superb.

Mr. Dent alleges that Mackenzie "quarrelled with Dr. Ryerson." "The art of putting things," as the "Country Parson" has told us in one of his best essays, is a most refined art. Mr. Dent has evidently been studying the essay. In his way of putting the so-called "quarrel" between the two men, he conveys, as he no doubt means to convey, the most unfavourable inference as to Mackenzie. If he had stated the facts such an inference could not possibly be drawn; but facts that tell in Mackenzie's favour are not what the author wants. In this case, as in many others, he suppresses them. He tries to lead his readers to believe that some wanton act of Mackenzie, which was intensified by "personal contempt" for the supposed wrong-doer, had driven Dr. Ryerson from the path of political rectitude, and that the Doctor, having the Methodist body pretty much in his breeches pockets, Mackenzie was the wolf who had also scared them from the true political fold.

## MACKENZIE'S AND RYERSON'S EARLY FRIENDSHIP.

Up to 1834 or '35 Mackenzie and Dr. Ryerson were personal and political friends. In 1826 the latter made his debut as a controversialist in a review of a sermon by Archdeacon Strachan on the death of Dr. Mountain, the Anglican Bishop of Quebec. The sermon was obnoxious to the "dissenters," as they were then called, and especially to the Methodist clergy, and the Doctor took up the cudgels valiantly in behalf of his own order. Mackenzie gave extensive circulation to the review through the *Advocate*, and was largely instrumental in securing for the reviewer any credit which he gained in the wordy war. Dr. Ryerson was at that time an ardent Liberal, more extreme, it would appear, than Mackenzie himself. For some years afterwards, in fact up to the close of 1833, he strongly sympathized with Mackenzie's political "plans of operation," so much so that, as we shall see, he was "accused of originating and supporting them." The Reform editor, in subsequently stating the Doctor's opinions at this period, said that "he (Ryerson) was ultra-liberal, praised the United States as the best of all human governments, and, acting with Mackenzie, Bidwell, Rolph and others, exerted a strong influence over the public mind." And, as to the Lower Canada Reformers, it was also said that "Papineau's and Viger's career he steadily defended like Dalton of the *Patriot*." Corroborative proof of this is readily procurable.

## THE "CHRISTIAN GUARDIAN" ON MACKENZIE.

Dr. Ryerson was subsequently appointed to the editorship of the *Christian Guardian*, which was then the organ, political as well as religious, of the Methodist body. In the *Guardian* of November 6th, 1833, we find an article, signed by him as editor, in which the writer expresses himself as follows in regard to Mackenzie:—

"Of Mr. Mackenzie we have but little to say. We have never, directly or indirectly, expressed our opinion publicly of his merits or plans of operation; though we have often been accused of originating and supporting them. Whatever measures Mr. Mackenzie may have originated and pursued, however beneficial many

of them may be, and whatever influence he may have acquired, he is not indebted to us for the ingenuity, excellence, or success of the one, nor the power of the other, but to his own unparalleled industry, his financial taste and talents, and his extraordinary public exertions. Wishing, in private life at least, to be the 'friend of all and enemy of none,' we have conversed, freely and friendly, in years past, with both Mr. Mackenzie and his opponents, and have always found Mr. Mackenzie as a man open, generous, ardent, punctual and honourable in all his engagements: and have believed that, however exceptionable much of his proceedings and writings were, their general tendency would be to secure rigid economy in the public expenditure, and remove abuses which candour must admit have gradually grown up in some parts of the administration of public affairs," etc.

There can be no mistaking the meaning and force of these sentiments deliberately expressed, though necessarily guarded, in a religious newspaper. How did it happen, then, that the two friends became estranged?

#### HOW THEY FELL OUT.

The simple truth is that Dr. Ryerson "quarrelled" with Mackenzie, and that the "quarrel"—if so inexpressive a word may be used—was, so far as Mackenzie was concerned, on public grounds alone. It seems that in 1833 the Doctor went to England, as a delegate from the Canadian Conference, to submit a proposition of union between the body which it represented and the English Methodists. He made a second visit in 1835 to obtain a Royal charter for the Upper Canada Academy, which was subsequently merged in the University of Victoria College, and to solicit subscriptions for that institution. On his first visit he was met by Mackenzie, who was then conferring with the Colonial Office as to the grievances complained of in Upper Canada. Having all along been one of his staunch political friends, the latter gave the Doctor all the assistance possible in the object of his mission by introductions to eminent Englishmen whose friendship the Reform leader had formed. He also secured for him an introduction to the Colonial Minister, which, as will be seen, was then an exceptional

favour. What first incensed Mackenzie in Dr. Ryerson's conduct was that he abused the privileges thus afforded him, by "artfully using them to injure the cause of the Reform party," and to thwart the efforts of his friend as its accredited agent. This was greatly aggravated afterwards by the Doctor's letters to the leading English journal in which he grossly misrepresented the principles and policy of the Liberal party in Canada. Mackenzie was most indignant at this, as he had every right to be, and his feelings were fully shared by his party. Mr. Lindsey in his biography of Mackenzie, says: "Without entering into the merits of the case, it will be sufficient to say that the course pursued by Mr. Ryerson, while in England and after his return to Canada, gave Mr. Mackenzie great offence, and he used often, to the last years of his life, to express regret that he had done anything to secure Mr. Ryerson admission to the Colonial Office, which, in spite of the access which Mr. Mackenzie obtained, had for nearly eighteen months shut its doors in the face of Mr. Viger, who went as the delegate of the Lower Canada Assembly. Mr. Baldwin, who afterwards visited London, was never able to obtain an audience of the Colonial Minister."

#### MACKENZIE'S ACCOUNT OF THE "QUARREL."

This whole matter was subsequently discussed in the Upper Canadian press. The Toronto *Examiner*, then edited by the late Sir Francis Hincks, and an able exponent of the views of the Liberal party, severely criticized and condemned Dr. Ryerson's conduct, which was fairly open to censure. In one of the numbers of *Mackenzie's Gazette*, published at New York, I find the following reference to the discussion. The editor says:—"I see long articles in the Toronto *Examiner* in reply to some remarks, from time to time, in the *Guardian*, which I seldom receive, about Mr. Egerton Ryerson's principles, and his introduction to the Colonial Office. \* \* I introduced him to Mr. Hume and others, and, as to an interview with Mr. Stanley at the Colonial Office, he never dreamt of it. But believing him sincerely attached to the Canadian people, I went one Sunday morning to Cleveland Square, saw the Secretary at War, Mr. Ellice, and after describing Mr.



Ryerson's talents and influence to him, I informed him that he (Ryerson) intended to leave for the Irish Conference on the morrow, and that I wanted much that Mr. Stanley, who was greatly hurried, would consent to see him. Mr. Ellice promised to procure him an interview, saw him himself next day, handed him fifty sovereigns to aid the Methodists to build a College, opened the portals of the Colonial Office for him, and then he (Ryerson) tried to undo with the Minister all I had been doing for the previous eighteen months. \* \* When I went to him at the Mission House, after I had seen the English Secretary, he had as little intention of remaining twenty-four hours in London, as I have of settling at Pekin in China. My confidence in him, as in many others like him, was misplaced, but his professions of friendship for the republican party up to that time had been most ardent, and it is probable they were sincere, until inordinate vanity and the hope of great gain turned his head and corrupted his heart. I then publicly denounced and abandoned him." These lines, be it observed, were prepared for publication in an American newspaper supporting the "republican" party which corresponded, more or less, in its views of popular liberty and civil rights, with the Canadian Reform party.

#### THE DOCTOR'S DOUBLE DEAL.

In 1836, during his second visit to England, Dr. Ryerson contributed a series of letters to the London *Times* over the signature of "A Canadian." These were exceedingly hostile to the measures of Canadian reform which Mackenzie, Hume, Roebuck and others had been advocating, and in regard to which they had created a most favourable impression in the English mind. The letters were also brimful of gushing loyalty to the mother country and British institutions, which, the writer represented, were seriously menaced by the attitude and policy of the Reformers in Canada. These communications were republished in this country, and, along with others from the same pen, were freely used by the Tories against the Reformers during the general election of 1836. But they served, and were no doubt intended to serve, another purpose as well. In England, where their anonymity was not concealed, they were a

capital card to play in the writer's itinerant collecting tour through the country, and gave him material assistance in his mission. Some time afterwards, in summing up the results of Dr. Ryerson's two visits to England, Mackenzie said that "he (Ryerson) struggled hard to obtain a slice or equivalent of the Clergy Reserves for his order;" that he "obtained an equivocal promise, returned to Canada, and came out in his press in favour of Sir Robert Peel;" that he "slandered his old Reform friends," and "carried a majority of the Methodist preachers in Conference with him;" that he "held out the hope to them of pecuniary benefit to their order, independent of the people, and of a \$16,000 grant of money promised him by Glenelg to a college at Cobourg;" and that he thereby "obtained the active and zealous co-operation of the whole Conference, at the last Upper Canada election, of a Legislature to crush the Reform majority, who had stood up so manfully for a domestic, frugal, responsible Government."

#### MACKENZIE AS A CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMER.

It is unnecessary to give the full quotation in which these passages occur. They are merely cited as indicating some of the material arguments employed to carry the elections. Dr. Ryerson had published, far and wide in England, that his old Reform allies here were un-British and disloyal. They were, as a matter of fact, supreme in the House of Assembly prior to the dissolution, and had gone the length of stopping the supplies. The Imperial Government were naturally desirous of destroying a supremacy that was represented to them, and which they believed, to be dangerous, and they were very ready to listen to any proposal that would weaken the Reformers in the contest. It was under these circumstances that Dr. Ryerson successfully pressed them to recommend to the Canadian Government a large money grant to the Cobourg Academy in which his church was interested. No one can regret that the grant was made. The Academy was thereby enabled to blossom forth into a College and University that have done yeoman service in the cause of higher education in the Province. But all this might have been accomplished in a different way. At all events, the recommendation was carried

out despite the opposition of Mackenzie and the Reform party, and also against the plainly expressed wishes of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Francis Bond Head. The Reformers, who were in a majority in the Assembly, opposed it as unconstitutional, in as much as it did not originate here, and was really a grant by the Home Government of money which did not belong to them, but to the people of the Colony who had no voice whatever in its appropriation. Under responsible Government the grant would never have been made as it was.

Mackenzie's references to this matter are fully borne out by Sir Francis Hincks, who, it seems, had very strong opinions on the subject. Writing editorially in the *Montreal Pilot* of August 19th, 1848, Mr. Hincks said: "Mr. Ryerson's grand weapon of attack, however, was the hostility manifested to the Wesleyan Methodist Church by the Reform majority in the 12th Parliament of Upper Canada. This hostility was manifested simply by opposing an unconstitutional pecuniary grant made to that Church, and which there is no doubt whatever was given for the very purpose of influencing their votes. It was indeed a paltry, very paltry bribe, but it was the means of creating discord."

And here let me ask again, was Mackenzie responsible for all this? Surely Mr. Dent would not be so unfair as to say that all those whose votes were thus unduly influenced were "moderate-minded Reformers" who preferred "even Family Compact domination" "to the ascendancy of such men as Mackenzie"? Yet, as I have already shown, that is just what he does say. Why did he not plainly give the 16,000 golden reasons for their submitting to the yoke of the Compact, and not leave, as he no doubt intends to leave, the odium upon Mackenzie of driving in a crisis a large number of honest and virtuous electors beyond the pale of his party, and making them apostates to Reform? The "moderation" of those who were thus won over may commend itself to Mr. Dent, but there are few moderate politicians in our day, either Reform or Conservative, who would care to accept so low a criterion of their political virtue.

## OLD BONES OF CONTENTION.

What I have written fully explains the relations subsisting, during a long period, between Mackenzie and Dr. Ryerson. It shows very clearly, I think, that the former was not to blame for the rupture of their personal and political friendship. Dr. Ryerson had a game of his own to play, and he found a ready excuse for doing so when a fair chance of success was presented to him. Let me say, however, that in striving to get a slice of the Clergy Reserves for his own Church, he was only doing what he had a perfect right to do. A large section of the Presbyterians did the same thing. In fact all religious sects were then clamouring for a share in a fund which they claimed was not created for the exclusive benefit of any one Church or denomination. Mackenzie was then in favour of the secularization of the Reserves, which, as we have seen, was prayed for in the petitions which he carried with him to England. On this and a number of other questions, he and Reformers generally disagreed with the notions of Reform which Dr. Ryerson sought to inculcate amongst his co-religionists, combatted them in the press and on the platform, and this led to angry political as well as personal differences which may be called a "quarrel," or whatever you will.

There is this also to be said that, although not avowedly a politician, Dr. Ryerson was really a politician all his life. "The structure of his mind," if Mr. Dent will permit me to borrow one of his anatomical and physiological expressions, was largely political. Had he devoted himself to politics, and entered the parliamentary arena, his success, as that quality is generally esteemed, would have been assured. As it was, he was very often a power behind, as well as before, the shifting scenes. It was the knowledge of this open secret, by all the politicians of his time, that so often brought him into collision with them. At the time that he fell foul of Mackenzie his ideas of Reform were just the same as they were in after years when he fell foul of the Hon. George Brown, the Hon. Edward Blake and other prominent Liberal leaders. His "Leonidas" letters, and his platform addresses, in defence of the arbitrary and unconstitutional policy of Sir Charles Metcalfe,

are not yet forgotten. Nor is the fact that, for many years on the eve of every general election, he was always to the fore with a series of political letters, or a political *brochure* of some sort, in support of his old Conservative patrons, and against his old Reform friends. Those most favourably disposed to Dr. Ryerson freely admit that the unaccountable attitude which he assumed as "Leonidas" was one of the greatest mistakes of his life. Nor is this impression lessened by the fact that he got his reward, from the reactionary Governor, in his appointment in 1844 as Chief Superintendent of the Public Schools of the Province.

#### A PAMPHLET THAT PAID.

There is a circumstance in connection with the publication of the "Leonidas" letters which, I believe, has never before been mentioned. It is said that their author was paid by Sir Charles Metcalfe at the rate of four pence currency per printed line for the writing of them, and that the total sum which he thus realized was about nine hundred or a thousand pounds. Mr. Gwatkin, who died a few years ago, and who was a partner of the late Mr. Hugh Scobie, the proprietor of the *Colonist* in which the letters appeared, said he was assured of this on the best authority. It is not at all improbable, and I do not mention it to Dr. Ryerson's discredit. Lord Metcalfe was wealthy, and his liberality was well known. The Doctor proved to be a powerful champion, and his championship was apparently sincere. The late Hon. George Brown used to say that he never knew of but two pamphlets that paid both the author and the publisher. I think the "Leonidas" pamphlet must have been one of them.

#### MACKENZIE AT THE COLONIAL OFFICE.

Mackenzie's visit to England, at the time of which we have been speaking, was prolonged for about sixteen months. It had a very important influence on the early fortunes of Reform, and was attended with far-reaching results. Its success at once accounts for Mr. Dent's singular reticence on the subject. He says very little about it, and the little he does say is in the familiar strain of



ill-natured depreciation. At the request of Lord Goderich, the Colonial Secretary, Mackenzie drew up a Memoir of the most serious grievances complained of in Upper Canada. Counter petitions from the Tories had already been sent Home, and, as these were backed by all the influence of the Canadian Government, it was highly necessary that the Memoir, and the documents accompanying it, should be considered by the Minister without delay. It was probably prepared with some haste, but even Mr. Dent admits that the facts were "pretty comprehensively embodied." Some idea of Mackenzie's industry, and his powers of application to work of this nature, may be got from the well attested fact that, in the preparation of these papers, he spent six days and six nights continuously at his desk, snatching only a few minutes occasionally for sleep. Few men would be capable of such a task, but it was one that, in a minor degree, he very often performed in the course of his public life. Although, from the effect which it produced, this Memoir must have been a powerful factum of the people's case, Mr. Dent cannot restrain his cynicism in regard to it. He says "the writer adopted a discursive and rhetorical style," but he does not mention, as in fairness he should have done, that "the writer" was only following the strict line of his duty. His instructions were to bring before the Home Government every subject of political interest that affected the grievances set forth in the petitions. These he conscientiously carried out, and a lengthy commentary was inevitable. I shall not attempt to calculate the extent of Mr. Dent's rhetorical discursiveness had he been in Mackenzie's position. Judging by the wordy dimensions of this 384-paged and padded out Story, we can form some idea of the quantity of political cant, rant and fustian that would have been unloaded at the Colonial Office door. It would have been something appalling.

The author's further remarks are very brief and in his usual pleasant strain. He says: "The perusal of the Memoir seems to have produced an impression upon the Colonial Secretary's mind. He wrote a long and elaborate despatch to Sir John Colborne, in which the weak points of Mackenzie's arguments were exposed with cutting severity, and wherein it was evident that very little weight had been attached to most of his representations; but at

the same time certain concessions to popular opinion were plainly hinted at." These "concessions" are dismissed by Mr. Dent in short order. In fact what he says altogether, about Mackenzie's mission and its results, takes up scarcely one page of the whole volume. He not only belittles Mackenzie's efforts, as he invariably does his public services generally, but he actually misrepresents them in his ungenerous allegation that the Minister had attached very little weight to the representations addressed to him. Had Rolph been the people's Agent-General, and accomplished half as much as Mackenzie, what a prolonged trumpeting of praise there would have been !

#### SOME OF THE FRUITS OF HIS MISSION.

The truth is that Mackenzie was received with great consideration by Lord Goderich, as well as by Mr. Stanley—afterwards Lord Derby—his successor at the Colonial Office. He had frequent interviews with both of them, was detained much longer in his conferences than he had any reason to expect, and was treated with distinguished kindness during his whole stay in England. His mission, under all the circumstances, was an unexampled success. He secured the payment of an indemnity to all members of the Upper Canada House of Assembly representing borough constituencies, thereby preventing the monopoly of the representation by wealthy men exclusively, and inducing those of limited means, whose services it was desirable to obtain, to accept seats in Parliament. The conscientious objections by large numbers of people to taking an oath in the usual form in Courts of Justice, and otherwise, were removed. Before this only Quakers were exempt, and were permitted to affirm. Similar privileges were thereafter conferred upon members of all other religious bodies. Hitherto the public lands of the Province had been parcelled out by the Executive amongst their favourites without competition, in many cases at a mere nominal figure, and often gratuitously. It was a most crying grievance, and Mr. Dent devotes whole paragraphs to denouncing the iniquities of the system. But he has not a word, in connection with it, in favour of Mackenzie, who was mainly instrumental in having the iniquity swept

away. Prior to this British subjects, who had been abroad at any time in foreign countries, were, on their coming to Canada, deprived of one of the most valued rights of a British citizen. They were thereby disqualified from voting at elections. This hardship was also summarily removed. Public education was then at a low ebb in this country. It was practically confined to the children of the wealthy classes, and its priceless benefits virtually denied to those of the yeoman and the artisan. Mackenzie, who had always been foremost in his advocacy of the education of the masses, made a strong case on this point. The Colonial Government were instructed by their Imperial masters "to forward, to the utmost of their lawful authority and influence, every scheme for the extension of education amongst the youth of the Province, and especially the poorest and most destitute amongst their number." In those days, too, no statements of the public revenue and expenditure were laid before the Legislature. The Lieutenant-Governors pleaded their Royal instructions in bar of any such duty. Mackenzie had this grievance thoroughly rectified by a despatch from Lord Goderich, in which the Executive were directed to practise no further "concealments upon questions of this nature." There was also the anomaly of ecclesiastics of the Anglican Church holding seats in the Legislative Council. Of these Archdeacon Strachan was one of the most active and influential in supporting the policy of the ruling party. The Colonial Secretary's representations on this head were no less distinct and plain. He advised that the political churchmen should resign their seats in the Council, and attend solely to the "spiritual good of the people." A judiciary, independent of the government of the day, had all along been one of the principal planks in Mackenzie's platform. Mr. Justice Willis, who had shown a mind and will of his own on the Bench, had, some time before, been arbitrarily removed by the Executive. The Colonial Office, for some reason or other, had determinedly opposed any change in these relations so compromising to the Government and the highest functionaries of the law. Mackenzie and those who acted with him, had, on the other hand, pressed continuously for an independent judiciary. They were at last successful. The Upper

Canada Executive were directed to pass a bill for that purpose, and it was passed. Messrs. Boulton and Hagerman, two high Crown Officers and members of the Executive, had been most active in procuring Mackenzie's expulsions from the Assembly. Mackenzie urged their removal from office, and they were removed accordingly.

While Mackenzie was still in England a change of Government occurred, Mr. Stanley taking Lord Goderich's place at the head of the Colonial Department. At the suggestion of Mr. Stanley, Mackenzie drew up an elaborate scheme of Post Office reform for the Province, and thereby compelled the disclosure of a vast amount of information about the Post Office revenue, and the department generally, which had been persistently withheld from the Legislature. He had, as will be remembered, brought this same subject under the notice of Mr. Stanley's predecessor, who had then offered him the Postmaster-Generalship of Upper Canada. He also invoked successfully the Royal veto of an objectionable bill for increasing the capital stock of the old bank of Upper Canada. Such a proceeding, by one who was not even a member of Parliament, will appear extraordinary now, but those were the days of irresponsible government in Canada, and the only appeal possible was to England. Mackenzie was the only man who ever secured a Royal veto single-handed and alone.

#### MACKENZIE'S SERVICES AND THE AUTHOR'S THANKS.

These were a few of the concessions—only “hinted at,” as Mr. Dent says—which Mackenzie was instrumental in securing from the Imperial Government. The despatch of Lord Goderich, on the various subjects which had been brought under his consideration and pressed home with conviction, was one of the most important that had ever yet been received in Canada with respect to the administration of its Government. It was important not merely in its bearing on the general course of Canadian affairs, but in its hopefully liberal spirit, and its decided tone throughout. It was a despatch very different in these respects from any previous messages from the same quarter, and was pregnant with political meaning to all concerned. The best evidence of Mackenzie's

whole work in England was that the happy issues of it, as set forth in this Imperial mandate of reform, were gall and wormwood to the all-powerful Tory party in Canada. Their indignation and resentment knew no bounds, and, in some instances, expression was given to these by utterances of marked disloyalty. Mackenzie had every reason to feel proud of the fruits of his errand across the sea. No other Canadian, who ever went there, had achieved anything like as much. And when it is considered that he went in no official capacity; that he had been thrice expelled from the Assembly; and that every effort was made in this and other ways, by the official party and their ready instrument, the Lieutenant-Governor, to embarrass and defeat him in his mission, his success was truly a marvel. Surely in a narrative written from a "Liberal but non-partisan point of view," some grateful appreciation should have been shown of the task which he discharged. But what does he receive? Mr. Dent awards him the barest pittance; he had much better have awarded him none. He sneers, in the most churlish manner, at Mackenzie's pecuniary sacrifices in spending his own money in the people's service, leaves it to be inferred, as far as possible, that he was practising a fraud upon the Reformers of Canada, and says that, "it would be much nearer the truth to say that Mackenzie enjoyed a sixteen months' holiday at the expense of his political friends." The author's treatment of this whole topic which is one of historic interest, is in the last degree unworthy of any writer of Liberal instincts. Mr. Dent's Liberalism is as convenient as his memory, and that is certainly a treasure which few men, of any literary pretensions whatever, would care to be blessed with.

#### THE CLOVEN FOOT AGAIN.

In dealing with this subject of political grievances the author again shows the cloven foot in a subsequent part of his Story. Speaking of the famous Seventh Report on grievances he says: "The famous Seventh Report, which did more to arouse the Home Government on the subject of Upper Canadian affairs than all previous efforts in that direction, was completed and presented



to the Assembly on Friday, the 10th of April (1835). It was a truly formidable indictment. It recapitulated the various grievances under which the Province laboured, and which called loudly for remedy. The prevailing tone of the Report was temperate and calm, and there is little or nothing in it to which serious exception can be taken." He then describes its "voluminous dimensions," and adds: "The first copy that left the binder's hands was forwarded to the Colonial Secretary. All the most pressing grievances were dealt with in greater or less detail, but special prominence was given to the necessity for a responsible Government—a Government responsible to public opinion, which must cease to exist when it ceases to command public confidence.

\* \* More than a third of the Report proper was devoted to dealing with the question in its various aspects," etc. Mr. Dent mentions Mackenzie as Chairman of the Committee appointed to consider the whole question, and gives the names of the other members composing the Committee, but just at this point, his memory becomes as lubrical as ever. He entirely forgets to mention the very well known fact which, one would suppose, was of some consequence, that this "famous Seventh Report" was the work of Mackenzie's hand. Now notice the author's tactics. Some thirty pages farther on he describes an interview between the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Francis Bond Head, and Mackenzie and some other leading members of the Reform party. He there, for the first time, slyly unveils the paternity of the Report, according to his own imperfect idea, and with a chuckle tells us that Mackenzie and Dr. Morrison were "chiefly responsible" for it. And why? The reader is not left long in the dark. After quoting one of the most offensive passages against Mackenzie which he can find in the Lieutenant-Governor's narrative of the interview, the author proceeds: "He (the Governor) attempted to discuss the merits of the Report with various persons, but encountered what was to him an inexplicable reluctance to talk about it. All were ready to discuss the grievances themselves, but no leading Reformer was disposed to admit the Report into the discussion. The reason of this was doubtless because the Report had been chiefly fathered by Mackenzie, and

they were unwilling to accept him as their mouthpiece." A conjecture so unfounded, and so pitifully contemptible, could only emanate from Rolph or his *alter ego* the author. But Mr. Dent's fertility of conjecture has already been noticed. He is ever ready to supply the deficiencies of fact from the resources of his own corrupt suspicions. His object here is very poorly concealed. Suggested by the words of a man whom he elsewhere brands as a liar of the first water, it is simply a very paltry attempt to discredit Mackenzie's standing and reputation at the time as a leader of the Reform party. After all said and done, what a beautiful personification of Liberalism in literature Mr. Dent is! And how faithfully he has mirrored it in the broad pages of this only truthful Story!

#### THE TRUE VERSION BY AN OLD JOURNALIST.

I may here be permitted to quote something on the same subject from another and better source. Not long since I had a letter from a gentleman who was intimately acquainted with Mackenzie, and some of those who took part in this interview, and who "learned all the facts at the time from those who were present." Referring to Mr. Dent's recital of what occurred, he says: "I notice some remarks in this book as to how leading Reformers dealt with the Report on grievances about which Lord Goderich had written Sir John Colborne. It is said they did not want to discuss the Report at all, and the statement is volunteered by the author that 'this was doubtless because the Report had been chiefly fathered by Mackenzie,' whom they were unwilling to accept as their mouth-piece." I happen to know that this statement is as untrue as anything can be. It is not true either that Mackenzie absolutely refrained from discussing the Report. The others, I believe, did, but their sole reason for so doing was the one given by Mr. Dent for Mackenzie's silence on the subject, viz.: 'The feeling that it would be unwise for him to tie himself down to a particular record, beyond which he would not be permitted to travel.' I say this with confidence because I learned all the facts at the time from those who were present. Mackenzie's paternity of the Report had nothing to do with it, and the slur cast upon him, whether an

invention of Rolph or of the author, is entirely undeserved. Rolph may be its real inventor, because his jealousy of Mackenzie and his influence was a well understood thing amongst the Reformers of that time. He fomented it amongst others as far as he could, but any feeling of that kind that existed was confined to a small section of the party who had neither the breadth of mind nor the toleration of true Liberals. Head may have had that idea impressed upon him, and it may account somewhat for his going over so completely to Strachan, Robinson and the Family Compact. If he were led to believe that there were divisions amongst the Reformers, he might well suppose that they were only pretenders to reform. And hence his violent and revolutionary proceedings to control the elections, as he did, for the Compact, and his utter repudiation of the fact that there were any grievances to redress."

The writer of the above is an old journalist, long since retired from the profession, who had the best means of ascertaining the facts, and whose testimony is, I believe, unimpeachable. I am quite willing that his statement of the matter should stand alongside those of Mr. Dent and Sir Francis Bond Head, a man whom Mr. Dent elsewhere charges with deliberate, unblushing falsehoods, but whom he is very ready to echo and endorse when Mackenzie is made the subject of them.

#### ADIEU TO THE "STORY."

I am done for the present with this truly unique Story. Its "idiosyncrasies" have not been exhausted; they are legion, for they are many. But enough has been said, I trust, to shew the spirit which animates the author and the burthen of his theme. I am content to leave all to the scanty measure of evanescent credit to which they are evidently entitled. Conscious, no doubt, of his hazardous experiment in a familiar field of enquiry—of his arrogant presumption in trampling under foot old political traditions, and the well settled record of history, the writer has striven to popularize his narrative with an endless garniture of words. These are a poor substitute for his conspicuous errors of judgment, and the obliquities of his story-telling generally. Mr. Dent has manifold tricks of style, and Sir Arthur Helps tells us

that "the style which has tricks in it is a bad style." Whether this aphorism apply or not, it is abundantly clear that the body of the true Story of the Rebellion has been sacrificed to the false drapery that displays it. The proportion of truth to error, in many parts of the narrative, is very like the proportion of bread to sack in Falstaff's tavern score. If there had been more of the substance and less of the drapery, more solid worth and less of the fripperies and gew-gaws of the literary pawn shop, Mr Dent might have gained something for his reputation. As it is he has gained nothing, if indeed he has not blundered irretrievably. I wish him well in his literary aspirations, but it would be uncandid to say that these have been helped by his present venture. He has thrown away a golden opportunity, and has strangely paltered with the rich bounty of material that fell lightly to his hand. I except, of course, the Rolph brief, which is a bad one. Whether he be sincere or not, he has not accomplished the main purpose of his book, nor the object of his own foolhardy ambition. His harshly inquisitorial and censorious spirit will not supplant, with a graven image of counterfeit heroism, the place which William Lyon Mackenzie has long held in the affections of Reformers, and the gratitude of the people. It has not made, and never will make, of John Rolph any more of a hero than he has ever been. This, in a word, is not a fair Story; it is not a trustworthy Story; it is not a credible Story. It is not a Story that deserves to live, and, I believe, it never will live, as an authoritative record of the period which thus far it presumes to review.

Not long since I came across an old pamphlet entitled, "The Answer to the awful Libel of the Spanish Freeholder against the Cardinal Alberoni." It is apparently a defence of an occupant of the Bench of Justice against a newspaper attack upon his character and reputation. There are two passages in the pamphlet that I shall not apologize for quoting, with some verbal alterations, leaving the application and the moral to Mr. Dent, and those who have perused his narrative. The anonymous pamphleteer, "Diego," says: "Calumny ever directs its acrimony against some particular object; fair and candid criticism spreads its remarks over the whole field of enquiry. Unrighteous resentment projects with

wanton fury against whatever accidentally provokes it ; bold and patriotic views regard the whole system with its general aberrations. Malevolence selects its victim ; honourable indignation animates to just and general scrutiny. Prejudice is prone to hasty and impassioned conclusions ; truth is displayed in the impartiality of research. The one riots in excess, and is, therefore, ever inconsistent ; the latter is an inmate of a wise and virtuous heart, and, therefore, blends capacity for general enquiry with fairness of induction."

Directing his pen against the treatment which his distinguished friend had received from the Spanish Freeholder, "Diego" says further : "There is indeed, as you observe, something admirable in honesty and sincerity, and there is, too, commonly something insolent in those who disparage such virtues. That honesty and sincerity about which you write with such sentimental hypocrisy, neither silence you into respect, nor soften you into moderation. Every base imputation that has been whispered about by the tongue of slander ; every unjust and designing charge which political envy has raised against him ; every idle report, which sprung up in malice and was for a season propagated by it, till each perished in its ephemeral course, is sought out by you with insect curiosity, and unfeelingly revived, and as unfeelingly recorded in a style which bespeaks well of your *head*, and, therefore, the worse of your *heart*."

There is one good end which this new "Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion" will certainly serve. It will quicken a desire for a judicious, impartial and dispassionate narrative, complete in detail and from a calmly philosophic point of view, of the whole movement that led up to the establishment of responsible Government in Canada. When such a narrative appears, Mr. Dent's will its *per contra*. Till then it will be simply a ponderous, tinselled, "extraordinary" monument of "extraordinary" story-telling.

JOHN KING.

BERLIN, *March 15th, 1886.*



## APPENDIX.

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THE following letter from a son of Dr. Rolph, a Toronto solicitor, appeared in the *Globe* of December 31st, 1885. The writer at once assumes the first letter from "A Reformer" of Ottawa to have been the production of Mr. Charles Lindsey, the well-known author of "The Life and Times of William Lyon Mackenzie," and he thereupon proceeds to make a violent attack on Mr. Lindsey and the Mackenzie biography. He also touches, in the same harum-scarum style, upon some controverted points in Canadian history, which are afterwards dealt with, as will be seen, in a second letter from "A Reformer."

### DR. ROLPH AND W. L. MACKENZIE.

SIR,—Mr. Charles Lindsey, dating his letter from Ottawa, writes under the name of "A Reformer" to the *Mail* of the 26th instant, one of the most disgraceful and unwarranted attacks on the memory of the dead that has characterized journalism in this country for the last half century. I am very much surprised to find that the *Mail* should allow its columns to be prostituted in a mean attempt to bolster up W. L. Mackenzie's reputation at the expense of Dr. Rolph's, by the repetition of stale and untruthful charges.

Mr. Lindsey evidently imagines that because he has published a book on the Rebellion, no other must ever be written, that his fictions are to stand for history to all future times, and that any attempt to show the truth and correct his errors must be rigidly suppressed. His book (of which large portions of the letter in the *Mail* are almost a *verbatim* rehash) is a fulsome laudation of William Lyon Mackenzie at the expense of nearly every one of the patriots of the time. It is the only professedly authentic account of the Rebellion ever published, but all the information in it relative to the rising itself is the production of Mackenzie's own pen, supported by two forged letters, one attributed to William Alves and the other to Silas Fletcher. It is replete with errors of fact and detail. Realizing the weakness of his position (and it is inconceivable that the *Mail* does not see it), Mr. Lindsey, without waiting for the publication of the whole of his rival's work, commences an anonymous and grossly vindictive attack on Dr. Rolph, who is of necessity mentioned in Mr. Dent's first volume, and will be treated of at length in his second.

Such venom must be patent to everyone. As a citizen of Canada, and as a son of Dr. Rolph, I protest, in the name of fair play, against the unjustifiable course pursued. Mr. Lindsey bases all his charges and criticisms on fictitious statements long ago made by Mackenzie, and subsequently reiterated by himself, which the testimony of witnesses, living and dead, now in Mr. Dent's hands, will completely refute and overthrow. There is ample material in his

hands to sustain the consistency of the conduct of Dr. Rolph, and many other of the patriots, heretofore basely misrepresented and maligned by Mackenzie and his biographer. It will be proper, however, for me to say here that the nature of the correspondence between my father and Mr. Baldwin up to 1849 (without reference to living witnesses) enables me to contradict the absurd and untruthful statement that Mr. Baldwin never spoke to Dr. Rolph after the pretended violation of the flag of truce in 1837.

Confident that the light of truth is about to be shed on no unimportant portion of our country's history, I am content to give a general denial to the rest of Mr. Lindsey's fictitious charges without at present further examining them and exposing their falsity, and to leave the public to judge of the unfairness of his methods of anonymous criticism.

T. T. ROLPH.

P.S.—I have no doubt Mr. Lindsey will rush into print with a denial that he wrote the letter signed "Reformer," and meanly dated at Ottawa. He is, no doubt, cunning enough to have placed himself in a position, with the help of his friends and connections, to make such a denial. But whatever subterfuge may be resorted to between him and the person he got to father his letter, the public may rest assured that he and he alone is its responsible author. His hero, Mackenzie, in 1852, declared in public print "that in the insurrection of 1837, I took no part civil or military, but merely acted as an individual, friendly to a change in the Canadas." After such a denial by Mackenzie of his earlier efforts (which is deliberately suppressed in "The Life and Times"), we may expect a prompt denial of authorship from the biographer.

T. T. R.

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In the editorial columns of the *Globe* containing the above production there appeared the following comment thereon. The italics are our own :—

"In another column will be found a letter replying to letters which have appeared in another journal concerning the connection of Dr. Rolph with the Rebellion of 1837. *That such a controversy should have arisen was inevitable*, however much it may be regretted. But in these days nobody thinks of entering in the interests of Toryism into the much larger question, whether the Family Compact was a blessing or a curse. Even the living representatives of the Family Compact fight shy of the task of defending the infamous tyranny of their ancestors."

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Mr. Charles Lindsey, the gentleman assailed in the above letter, made the following reply in the *Globe* of January 1st, 1886 :—

**"ROLPH AND MACKENZIE."**

SIR,—In a letter published in your issue of this date, Mr. T. T. Rolph attributes to me the authorship of a letter which appeared in the *Mail* of the 26th inst., dated Ottawa, and signed "A Reformer." I neither wrote the letter in question nor contributed in any way to its production. I demand that Mr.

Rolph at once make good his charge, which he cannot do, or unequivocally withdraw it. If it be any satisfaction to him, I may say that it is my intention to deal fully with Mr. Dent's book over my own signature. Should Mr. Rolph refuse to do what, as a man of honour, is incumbent upon him, the public will have no difficulty in deciding upon his conduct.

CHARLES LINDSEY.

TORONTO, Dec. 31st.

Mr. T. T. Rolph now reappears on the scene with a second letter to the *Globe* of January 5th, 1886. In this he refuses to accept Mr. Lindsey's straightforward denial of the authorship of the Ottawa letter, to withdraw his unfounded statements against that gentleman, or to make any *amende* whatever. So far from that, he not only reiterates his former statements, but also endeavours to blacken the name and memory of William Lyon Mackenzie by a false and reckless charge against him of universal treachery:—

#### ROLPH AND MACKENZIE.

SIR,—It is too late for Mr. Lindsey to announce his intention of attacking Mr. Dent under his own signature. He should have come out like a man before he wrote anonymously to the *Week* and *Mail*, etc.

What right, I ask, has the son-in-law of William Lyon Mackenzie, the author of the book, entitled his "Life and Times," etc., to attack Mr. Dent's book, except under his own name? Now, after having endeavoured to lead the public to suppose that independent writers were giving their views in advance of Mr. Dent's book, he volunteers the information that he himself is going to do so in due time.

Does Mr. Lindsey really believe that, as William Lyon Mackenzie endeavoured from the moment defeat stared him in the face on the outskirts of Toronto, to criminate and betray friend and foe alike by a course of treachery defensible to posterity on the ground of insanity alone, that I am to betray the confidences reposed in me on the mere *ipse dixit* of the son-in-law?

Do the public of Canada require mathematical proof that Mr. Lindsey and his connections are the only men in the country to-day who would gratuitously assail Dr. Rolph's memory and Mr. Dent's conduct by disgraceful anonymous communications before even the completion of the latter's story, building, too, their furious slanders simply and solely (with one exception) by quotations from Mr. Lindsey's own book? Mr. Lindsey will learn to his cost, before this discussion is ended, that he is not the only man who can quote from the old files of the *Globe*. It will be for the public to judge when they have all the facts before them whether he or Dr. Rolph appears to the better advantage.

T. T. ROLPH.

[NOTE.—The personal part of this controversy must here cease so far as the *Globe* is concerned. It is instructive to note that no one defends the Tory Family Compact, however people may differ on other points.—ED. *Globe*.]

To the above Mr. Lindsey made the following brief reply, in which he announces his intention of bringing out a second enlarged edition of the Mackenzie biography. This letter, which was sent to both the *Globe* and *Mail*, appeared only in the *Mail* of January 6th, 1886 :—

*ROLPH AND MACKENZIE.*

*To the Editor of the Mail.*

SIR,—Mr. T. T. Rolph charged me, in a letter published in the *Globe*, with writing a communication which appeared in your columns, dated Ottawa and signed “A Reformer.” I met him with an unequivocal denial, and asked him to do, what no man of honour would refuse, either to offer proof of his statement or withdraw it. Mr. Rolph is unable to offer proof, and refuses to make the *amende* which any gentleman in his position would make. I shall, therefore, take no further notice of what may be said by him or anyone who guides his pen. Mr. Rolph charges that I made a statement in my “Life of Mackenzie” on the evidence of two forged letters. This statement, like the other, is false. The historical evidence on the point in dispute will be fully treated by me in a work intended to take a permanent form.

Yours, etc.,

TORONTO, *January 5th.*

CHARLES LINDSEY.

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The above letter was sent to the *Globe* for publication. It did not appear in that journal on account of the editor having previously shut down on the controversy with the second letter of Mr. T. T. Rolph.









